

THE
CORNHILL MAGAZINE.

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LETTERS OF CHARLES DICKENS TO
BARONESS BURDETT-COUTTS.

EDITED BY CHARLES C. OSBORNE.

II.

THE steps where there used formerly to be a daily gathering of artists' models are the magnificent flight which leads from the Piazza di Spagna to the Church of Sta. Trinità de' Monti. The first house on the right of these steps is where Keats died, and is now the Keats-Shelley Memorial House.

The Reverend Sydney Smith (1771-1845), one of the wittiest Englishmen of any age, was honoured for his manliness and honesty ; he was one of the founders of *The Edinburgh Review*.

Thomas Hood (1799-1845), the friend of Lamb, Hazlitt and De Quincey, a great poet whose genius has never been adequately recognised, for while 'The Song of the Shirt,' and 'The Bridge of Sighs' have justly retained their popularity, such a great poem as 'The Haunted House' is almost unknown. Dickens pays no more than an adequate tribute to him when he writes that he was a man 'of prodigious force and genius as a poet.' 'The Lady' was Mrs. Brown, formerly Miss Meredith, the Baroness's companion.

ROME,

Eighteenth March, 1845.

MY DEAR MISS COUTTS,—

I am very much afraid that the date of this letter will contrast, to my disadvantage, with the date of Twelfth Night ; which you made a proud night for Charley in Genoa, and a happy night to me in the more secret quarter of my own breast, by your kind and generous remembrance. But I have been so constantly and incessantly on the wing since that great finale of the Christmas Holidays ; and have been so cold, and so wet, and so muddy, and so everything which is currently supposed to be incompatible with Italy—and have been into such extraordinary places, and have eaten such unaccountable meals, and have slept in such incredible beds, and have led altogether, such a wild and preposterous life—that I have not had the heart to write to you, lest my letter,

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partaking in some degree of the character of my existence, should be of too vagabond a nature for delivery at your door.

Before I left Genoa, I had all the knives locked up ; fearing that Charley would otherwise in the excitement of his feelings, lay hands upon a sharp one, and do himself a mischief—I don't mean with any evil design upon his life, but in the endeavour to make a pen wherewith to write a note to you. The intention was so very active within him that I should have allowed him to gratify it, but for his writing being something large for the Foreign Post, which, at his rate of penmanship, would hardly carry more than his name. But I gave him a solemn promise that I would thank you twenty thousand times. That I would report him tolerant of Italian life and manners, but not attached to them ; yielding a strong preference to those of his own country. That I would say he never could forget his ride with you to Hampstead. That I would tell you that such a thing as a Twelfth cake was never seen in Genoa before ; and that when it went to a Swiss Pastry-cook's in that City, to have the sugar repaired (it was a very little chipped at one corner) it was *exhibited* to the principal Inhabitants, as a wonder and Marvel. That I would give his love and his sisters' loves to 'that lady,' and would add that I had at length succeeded in impressing on their minds the great truth that she didn't always live in bed. That I would say that he looked forward to coming with me to see and thank you on our return to England. And that I would be sure to tell you a great deal more, which I will not inflict upon you on any account.

The weather has been atrocious ever since I returned from England at Christmas. I do not think I ever felt it so cold as between this place and Naples, about a month ago. Between Naples and Paestum too, three weeks ago, with a cold North wind blowing over mountains covered with snow ; it was quite intolerable. Within the last three days, there have been glimpses of Spring. I will not say more, in the fulness of my heart ; for experience has taught me that to-morrow may be deep in winter again. I have certainly seen more Sun in England, between the end of December and the middle of March, than I have seen in Italy in that time, and for violent and sudden changes, there is surely no country in the world more remarkable than this. When it is fine (as people say) it is very fine—so beautiful, that the really good days blot out the recollection of the bad ones. But I do honestly believe that it is not oftener fine here, than it is elsewhere ; and that we

are far better off at home in that respect, than anything short of the rack, would induce most people to confess.

In the mass, I like the common people of Italy, very much—the Neapolitans least of all; the Romans next, for they are fierce and brutal. Not falling on very good specimens of the higher orders, in the beginning, I have not pursued that Enquiry. I have had no leisure to do so, if I had had the inclination, so I have avoided them as much as possible, and have kept the greater part of my letters of introduction in my own desk. Florence I have not yet seen; intending to take it, next week, on my way back to Genoa. But of all the places I have seen, I like Venice, Genoa, and Verona most. The Bay of Genoa has charms, in my eyes, which the Bay of Naples wants. The city of Genoa is very picturesque and beautiful, and the house we live in, is really like a Palace in a Fairy Tale.

I cannot remember, to my satisfaction, whether you were ever at Herculaneum and Pompeii. Though my impression is, that I have heard you speak of them. The interest and wonder of those ruined places, far exceeded my utmost expectations. Venice was such a splendid Dream to me, that I can never speak of it—from sheer inability to describe its effect upon my mind. The ancient parts of Rome, and a portion of the Campagna, are *what I meant* when I came here; the rest a little below my imaginary mark, and very unlike it. The Coliseum by daylight, moonlight, torchlight, and every sort of light, most stupendous and awful. Saint Peter's not so impressive within, as many cathedrals I have seen at home. The great altar, and the state entrance to the subterranean church might be Rundell and Bridge's show-room. And the canopies, hangings, and carpets (of all sorts of reds and greens) now hung up, and put down, for the Holy-Week ceremonies, have the effect of an enormous Bon-bon. Before which, and round which, and indeed out of which, they are perpetually carrying the poor old Pope about on men's shoulders, like a gorgeous Guy Faux.

The drollest thing I have seen, is a daily gathering of artists' 'Models' on the steps of a church near the house (Meloni's Hotel) in which we live: where they dispose themselves in conventionally picturesque attitudes, and wait to be hired as sitters. The first time I went up there, I could *not* conceive how their faces were familiar to me—how they seemed to have bored me, for many years, in every variety of action and costume—and to come back upon my sight as perfect nightmares. At last it flashed upon me

all at once that we had made acquaintance, and improved it, on the walls of the Royal Academy. So we had indeed. And there is not one among them whom you wouldn't know, at first sight, as well as the statue at Charing Cross. The most aggravating of the party is a dismal old patriarch, with very long white hair and beard, who carries a great staff in his hand : which staff has been faithfully copied at the Exhibition in all its twists and knots, at least once through the catalogue. He is the venerable model. Another man in a sheepskin, who always lies asleep in the sun (when there is any) is the Pastoral Model. Another man in a brown cloak who leans against a wall with his arms folded, is the assassin model. Another man who looks over his shoulder and always seems to be going away, but never goes, is the haughty model. Several women and children form the family models, and the cream of the whole is, that they are one and all the falsest rascals in Rome or out of it ; being specially made up for their trade, and having no likeness among the whole population. It is a good illustration of the student life as it is, that young men should go on copying these people elaborately time after time, and time out of mind, and find nothing fresh or suggestive in the actual world about them.

My English papers tell me of the death of Sydney Smith, whom I deeply regret. I also hear privately, that Hood, the author, is past all chance of recovery. He was (I have a sad presentiment that even now I may speak of him as something past) a man of great power—of prodigious force and genius as a poet—and not generally known perhaps, by his best credentials. Personally he had a most noble and generous spirit. When he was under the pressure of severe misfortune and illness, and I had never seen him, he went far out of his way to praise me ; and wrote (in the *Athenæum*) a paper on *The Curiosity Shop* ; so full of enthusiasm and high appreciation, and so free from any taint of envy or reluctance to acknowledge me a young man far more fortunate than himself, that I can hardly bear to think of it.

I hope to be in Genoa again before the middle of next month ; and have arranged to leave there and turn homeward, in the middle of June. Whether we may linger on the way in France or Switzerland, I do not yet quite know. But in that case it is probable that I may run on to London for two or three days to preside at a Public Dinner in aid of the Sanatorium. I shall hope to see you then, at latest, unless (I wish there were any hope of it !) you should

be coming Genoa-way, and would give me a chance of showing you the Peschiere orange trees.

In any case when I am among them again, I shall trouble you with at least one more of Charley's messages, and a few words of my own. For I fear that I may otherwise (not undeservedly) pass out of your remembrance; and believe me, Dear Miss Coutts, there are not many memories from which it would give me so much pain to fade, as from yours. I rate its worth too highly.

Ever Yours faithfully,

CHARLES DICKENS.

P.S.—Mrs. Dickens begs to unite in best regards to yourself, and 'the lady'—who is well, I hope—and happy, I know. I hope you cried when you read the *Chimes*.

The Eltons are the family mentioned in the preceding number of CORNHILL, p. 651.

DEVONSHIRE TERRACE,

Seventeenth September, 1845.

. . . With a smaller sum, my dear Miss Coutts, I think I can do, on your behalf, an infinitely greater service. George Cruikshank came to me some weeks ago, and told me the facts of the melancholy little history I am going to state to you. He asked me if I thought I could influence any rich friend in the sufferer's behalf. You were not in the way. I do not know that I should have had the courage to come to you, if you had been, and I told him No; I could not then; but if I ever could, I would. I should premise that Cruikshank is one of the best creatures in the world in his own odd way (he is a live caricature himself); and that to the extent of his means, he had rendered assistance here, already, from his own purse.

I don't know if you ever saw a book called *Mornings at Bow Street*. It is a collection of Bow Street reports that appeared, years and years ago, in the *Morning Herald*; and did the paper immense service at that time. The writer is a Mr. White, who from that time until very recently, has been connected with the *Herald* as one of its sub-editors. The paper changed hands within this year and a Half, or so—he was not wanted in the new arrangements—and at 60 years of age was suddenly discharged, with a month's salary, from the establishment that had not only been his income but his whole prospect; for he thought himself (quite naturally) a leaf of the tree, and believed he would never be shaken off until he died. He had lived upon his salary, but had done no

more—I really don't see how he could have done more—and this was a blow, as if his Bank had failed, or he had become paralysed.

His daughter had been engaged to be married, *Fourteen Years*. Her lover was not rich—was fighting his way, very slowly, to the Bar—and they had always said they would be married when he was 'called.' After all these many years, he was called, at last; and her wedding clothes were being made, when one night (just at the time of this discharge) after they had been to the opera together, he went home to his chambers and was seized with congestion of the Brain. In a very few hours she was sent for. If she wished to see him before he died, the message said, she must come without delay. She was taken down to the Adelphi (where the chambers were) by her mother; and they arrived in the Bedroom, just in time to see him die. Quite frantic, she ran out of the chamber; opened a window, four tall stories high; and plunged herself, head-foremost from it! By a kind of miracle, she fell into a tank of water at the back of one of the neighbouring houses; and was taken out, insensible, but unhurt. Since that time, she has been watched, day and night. Her mother has never been told the Truth, but the father knows it. The poor girl sits all day in a sort of dream, repeating little scraps of comfort from the Bible. She has never shed a tear.

The wretched father is oppressed with some small debts. But they are very small; and if he could release his plate, which he has pawned for Thirty Pounds, I have no doubt Cruikshank could compound for every one of them with the produce of its sale; and then he could, with an easier mind, seek some employment: or at the worst, go away to live with his son who is a poor curate—I think in Wales. My dear Miss Coutts, these are all miserable facts within my knowledge. Thirty Pounds here, will be like Help from Heaven. There is no possibility of imposition; Cruikshank has known the parties twenty years at least; and the circumstances surely are peculiarly affecting and distressful.

My letter is so long already, that I will tell of the other Eltons in my next. We have never had the least trouble with them; and they are all as well, as happy, and as full of promise—thank God for it!—as we could possibly desire.

DEVONSHIRE TERRACE,

Wednesday, *Twenty-second April*, 1846.

... Until within a fortnight or three weeks ago, I have retained the intention of entering Charley in May [at King's Col-

lege]. But since then, I have conceived the idea of going to Switzerland for a year. Firstly, because I am most desirous to separate myself in a marked way from the *Daily News* (with which I have long since ceased to have any connexion, and in connecting myself with which at all, I have no doubt I made a mistake). Secondly, because I have a long book to write, which I could write better in retirement. Thirdly because I want to get up some mountain knowledge in all the four seasons of the year, for purposes of fiction.

In 1846 Miss Burdett-Coutts decided to establish a Home for women in the West End of London, and among those she first consulted was Dickens, who spared neither time nor trouble in furtherance of the scheme.

DEVONSHIRE TERRACE,

Twenty-sixth May, 1846.

. . . In reference to the Asylum, it seems to me very expedient that you should know, if possible, whether the Government would assist you to the extent of informing you from time to time into what distant parts of the World, women could be sent for marriage, with the greatest hope for their future families, and with the greatest service to the existing male population, whether expatriated from England or born there. If these poor women *could* be sent abroad with the distinct recognition and aid of the Government, it would be a service to the effort. But I have (with reason) a doubt of all Governments in England considering such a question in the light in which men undertaking that immense responsibility, are bound, before God, to consider it. And therefore I would suggest this appeal to you, merely as something which you owe to yourself and to the experiment; the failure of which, does not at all affect the immeasurable goodness and happiness of the project itself.

I do not think it would be necessary, in the first instance at all events, to build a house for the Asylum. There are many houses, either in London or in the immediate neighbourhood, that could be altered for the purpose. It would be necessary to limit the number of inmates, but I would make the reception of them as easy as possible to themselves. I would put it in the power of any Governor of a London Prison to send an unhappy creature of this kind (by her own choice of course) straight from his prison, when her term expired, to the asylum. I would put it in the power of any penitent creature to knock at the door, and say for God's sake, take me in. But I would divide the interior into two

portions ; and into the first portion I would put all new-comers without exception, as a place of probation, whence they should pass, by their own good conduct and self-denial alone, into what I may call the Society of the house. I do not know of any plan, so well conceived, or so firmly grounded in a knowledge of human nature, or so judiciously addressed to it, for observance in this place, as what is called Captain Maconnochie's Mark System, which I will try very roughly and generally, to describe.

A woman or girl coming to the asylum, it is explained to her that she has come there for *useful* repentance and reform, and means her past way of life has been dreadful in its nature and consequences, and full of affliction, misery, and despair to *herself*. Never mind society while she is at that pass. Society has used her ill and turned away from her, and she cannot be expected to take much heed of its rights or wrongs. It is destructive to herself, and there is no hope in it, or in her, as long as she pursues it. It is explained to her that she is degraded and fallen, but not lost, having this shelter ; and that the means of Return to Happiness are now about to be put into her own hands, and trusted to her own keeping. That with this view, she is instead of being placed in this probationary class for a month, or two months, or three months, or any specified *time* whatever, required to earn there a certain number of Marks (they are mere scratches in a book) so that she may make her probation a very short one, or a very long one, according to her own conduct. For so much work, she has so many marks ; for a day's good conduct, so many more. For every instance of ill-temper, disrespect, bad language, any outbreak of any sort or kind, so many—a very large number in proportion to her receipts—are deducted. A perfect Debtor and creditor account is kept between her and the Superintendent, for every day ; and the state of that account, it is in her own power and nobody else's, to adjust to her advantage. It is expressly pointed out to her, that before she can be considered qualified to return to any kind of society—even to the Society of the asylum—she must give proofs of her power of self-restraint and her sincerity, and her determination to try to show that she deserves the confidence it is proposed to place in her. Her pride, emulation, her sense of shame, her heart, her reason, and her interest, are all appealed to at once, and if she pass through this trial, she *must* (I believe it to be in the eternal nature of things) rise somewhat in her own self-respect, and give the Managers a power of appeal

to her, in future, which nothing else could invest them with. I would carry a modification of this mark system through the whole establishment ; for it is its great philosophy and its chief excellence that it is not a mere form or course of training adapted to the life within the house, but it is a preparation—which is a much higher consideration—for the right performance of duty outside, and for the formation of habits of firmness and self-restraint. And the more these unfortunate persons were educated in their duty towards Heaven and Earth, and the more they were tried on this plan, the more they would feel that to dream of returning to society, or of becoming virtuous wives, until they had earned a certain gross number of marks required of everyone without the least exception, would be to prove that they were not worthy of restoration to the place they had lost. It is a part of this system, even to put at last, some temptation within their reach, as enabling them to go out, putting them in possession of some money, and the like ; for it is clear that unless they are used to some temptation and used to resist it, within the walls, their capacity of resisting it without, cannot be considered as fairly tested.

What they would be taught in the house, would be grounded in religion, most unquestionably. It must be the basis of the whole system. But it is very essential in dealing with this class of persons to have a system of training established, which while it is steady and firm, is cheerful and hopeful. Order, punctuality, cleanliness, the whole routine of household duties, as washing, mending, cooking—the establishment itself would supply the means of teaching practically, to everyone. But then I would have it understood by all—I would have it written up in every room—that they were not going through a monotonous round of occupation and self-denial which began and ended there, but which began, or was resumed, under that roof, and would end, by God's blessing, in happy homes of their own.

I have said that I would put it in the power of Governors of Prisons to recommend Inmates. I think this most important, because such gentlemen as Mr. Chesterton of the Middlesex House of Correction, and Lieutenant Tracy of Cold Bath Fields, Bridewell, (both of whom I know very well) are well acquainted with the good that is in the bottom of the hearts of many of these poor creatures, and with the whole history of their past lives, and frequently have deplored to me the not having any such place as the proposed establishment, to which to send them when they are set free from

Prison. It is necessary to observe that very many of these unfortunate women are constantly in and out of the Prisons, for no other fault or crime than their original one of having fallen from virtue. Policemen can take them up, almost when they choose, for being of that class, and being in the streets; and the magistrates commit them to Jail for short terms. When they come out, they can but return to their old occupation, and so come in again. It is well known that many of them fee the Police to remain unmolested; and being too poor to pay the fee, or dissipating the money in some other way, are taken up again, forthwith. Very many of them are good, excellent, steady characters when under restraint—even without the advantage of systematic training, which they would have in this Institution—and are tender nurses to the sick, and are as kind and gentle as the best of women.

There is no doubt that many of them would go on well for some time, and would then be seized with a violent fit of the most extraordinary passion, apparently quite motiveless, and insist on going away. There seems to be something inherent in their course of life, which engenders and awakens a sudden restlessness and recklessness which may be long suppressed, but breaks out like madness; and which all people who have had opportunities of observation in Penitentiaries and elsewhere, must have contemplated with astonishment and pity. I would have some rule to the effect that no request to be allowed to go away would be received for at least four and twenty hours, and that in the interval the person should be kindly reasoned with, if possible, and implored to consider well what she was doing. This sudden dashing down of all the building up of months upon months, is, to my thinking, so distinctly a Disease with the persons under consideration that I would pay particular attention to it, and treat it with particular gentleness and anxiety; *and I would not make one, or two, or three, or four, or six departures from the establishment a binding reason against the re-admission of that person being again penitent*, but leave it to the Managers to decide upon the merits of the case: giving very great weight to general good conduct within the house.

I would begin with some comparatively small number—say thirty—and I would have it impressed upon them, from day to day, that the success of the experiment rested with them, and that on their conduct depended the rescue and salvation, of hundreds and thousands of women yet unborn. In what proportion this experiment would be successful, it is very difficult to predict; but I

think that if the Establishment were founded on a well-considered system, and were well managed, one half of the Inmates would be reclaimed from the very beginning, and that after a time the proportion would be much larger. I believe this estimate to be within very reasonable bounds.

The main question that arises is, if the co-operation of the Government—beginning at that point when they are supposed to be reclaimed—cannot be secured, how are they to be provided for, permanently? Supposing the Mark system and the training to be very successful, and gradually to acquire a great share of public confidence and respect, I think it not too sanguine to suppose that many good people would be glad to take them into situations. But the power of beginning life anew, in a world perfectly untried by them, would be so important in many cases, as an effectual detaching of them from old associates, and from the chances of recognition and challenge, that it is most desirable to be, somehow or other, attained.

I do not know whether you would be disposed to entrust me with any share in the supervision and direction of the Institution. But I need not say that I should enter on such a task with my whole heart and soul; and that in this respect, as in all others, I have but one sincere and zealous wish to assist you, by any humble means in my power, in carrying out your benevolent institution.

And at all events it would be necessary for you to have, in the first instance, on paper, all the results of previous experience in this way, as regards scheme, plan, management, and expense. These I think I could procure, and render plain, as quietly and satisfactorily as anyone. And I would suggest to you, this course of action.

That the School and Church proceeding—this Design remain in abeyance for the present. That when I go to Paris (whither I shall remove, please God, before Christmas) I examine every Institution of this sort existing there, and gather together all the information I possibly can. I believe more valuable knowledge is to be got there, on such a subject, than anywhere else; and this, combined with the results of our English experience, I would digest into the plainest and clearest form; so that you could see it, as if it were a Map. And in the meantime you would have these advantages.

1. That in the establishment of your school and Dispensary,

you might find or make some Instruments that would be very important and useful in the working out of this school.

2. That there will then have been matured, and probably tried, certain partial schemes going a very little way on this same road, which are now on foot in the City of London, and the success or failure of which will be alike instructive.

3. That there is a very great probability of the whole Transportation system being shortly brought under the consideration of the Legislature; and it is particularly worthy of consideration that the various preliminary reports on the subject (which I have lately been reading), recognise the question of sending out women to the different settlements, as one of very great importance.

I have that deep sense, dear Miss Coutts, of the value of your confidence in such a matter, and of the pure, exalted, and generous motives by which you are impelled, that I feel a most earnest anxiety that such an effort as you contemplate in behalf of your Sex, should have every advantage in the outset it can possibly receive, and should, if undertaken at all, be undertaken to the lasting honor of your name and Country. In this feeling, I make the suggestion I think best calculated to promote that end. Trust me, if you agree in it, I will not lose sight of the subject, or grow cold to it, or fail to bestow upon it my best exertions and reflection. But, if there be any other course you would prefer to take, and you will tell me so; I shall be as devoted to you in that as in this, as much honored by being asked to render you the least assistance.

In furtherance of his plan to put it in the power of magistrates, governors of prisons, and others, to recommend inmates to the Home, which it had been decided should be called Urania College, and which was located at Shepherd's Bush, Dickens drew up the following anonymous invitation, which was printed in a four-page quarto form. This remarkable appeal, which will certainly rank among the most beautiful and pathetic things Dickens ever wrote, had never been fully published until during 1930 a reprint of it was issued for private circulation to the members of the Boston Bibliophile Society, United States. It has been pointed out by Mr. J. W. T. Ley that the appeal was written the same year Dickens began *David Copperfield*, and Mr. Ley thinks that the character of Martha was probably suggested to the author by his work on behalf of the Home at Shepherd's Bush.

Miss Burdett-Coutts's London residence was 1 Stratton Street, and the chief windows overlooked Piccadilly. The house with its many historic associations has been demolished.

'You will see, on beginning to read this letter, that it is not addressed to you by name. But I address it to a woman—a very young woman still—who was born to be happy, and has lived miserably ; who has no prospect before her but sorrow, or behind her but a wasted youth ; who, if she has ever been a mother, has felt shame, instead of pride in her own unhappy child.

'You are such a person, or this letter would not be put into your hands. If you have ever wished (I know you must have done so, sometimes) for a chance of rising out of your sad life, and having friends, a quiet home, means of being useful to yourself and others, peace of mind, self-respect, everything you have lost, pray read it attentively, and reflect upon it afterwards. I am going to offer you, not the chance but the certainty of all these blessings, if you will exert yourself to deserve them. And do not think that I write to you as if I felt myself very much above you, or wished to hurt your feelings by reminding you of the situation in which you are placed. God forbid ! I mean nothing but kindness to you, and I write as if you were my sister.

'Think, for a moment, what your present situation is. Think how impossible it is that it ever can be better if you continue to live as you have lived, and how certain it is that it must be worse. You know what the streets are ; you know how cruel the companions that you find there, are ; you know the vices practised there, and to what wretched consequences they bring you, even while you are young. Shunned by decent people, marked out from all other kinds of women as you walk along, avoided by the very children, hunted by the police, imprisoned, and only set free to be imprisoned over and over again—reading this very letter in a common jail—you have, already, dismal experience of the truth. But, to grow old in such a way of life, and among such company—to escape an early death from terrible disease, or your own maddened hand, and arrive at old age in such a course—will be an aggravation of every misery that you know now, which words cannot describe. Imagine for yourself the bed on which you, then an object terrible to look at, will lie down to die. Imagine all the long, long years of shame, want, crime, and ruin, that will rise before you. And by that dreadful day, and by the Judgment that will follow it, and by the recollection that you are certain to have then, when it is too late, of the offer that is made to you now, when it is NOT too late, I implore you to think of it, and weigh it well !

‘There is a lady in this town, who, from the windows of her house, has seen such as you going past at night, and has felt her heart bleed at the sight. She is what is called a great lady ; but she has looked after you with compassion, as being of her own sex and nature ; and the thought of such fallen women has troubled her in her bed. She has resolved to open, at her own expense, a place of refuge very near London, for a small number of females, who, without such help, are lost for ever ; and to make it a HOME for them. In this Home they will be taught all household work that would be useful to them in a home of their own, and enable them to make it comfortable and happy. In this Home, which stands in a pleasant country lane, and where each may have her little flower-garden, if she pleases, they will be treated with the greatest kindness ; will lead an active, cheerful, healthy life ; will learn many things it is profitable and good to know ; and, being entirely removed from all who have any knowledge of their past career, will begin life afresh, and be able to win a good name and character. And because it is not the lady’s wish that these young women should be shut out from the world, after they have repented and have learned how to do their duty there, and because it is her wish and object that they may be restored to society—a comfort to themselves and it—they will be supplied with every means, when some time shall have elapsed, and their conduct shall have fully proved their earnestness and reformation, to go abroad, where, in a distant country, they may become the faithful wives of honest men, and live and die in peace.

‘I have been told that those who see you daily in this place, believe that there are virtuous inclinations lingering within you, and that you may be reclaimed. I offer the Home I have described in these few words, to you.

‘But, consider well before you accept it. As you are to pass from the gate of this Prison to a perfectly new life, where all the means of happiness from which you are now shut out, are opened brightly to you, so remember, on the other hand, that you must have the strength to leave behind you, all old habits. You must resolve to set a watch upon yourself, and to be firm in your control over yourself, and to restrain yourself ; to be patient, gentle, persevering, and good-tempered. Above all things, to be truthful in every word you speak. Do this, and all the rest is easy. But you must solemnly remember that if you enter this Home without such constant resolutions, you will occupy, unworthily and uselessly,

the place of some other unhappy girl, now wandering and lost ; and that her ruin, no less than your own, will be upon your head, before Almighty God, who knows the secrets of our breasts, and Christ, who died upon the Cross to save us.

‘In case there should be anything you wish to know, or any question you would like to ask, about this Home, you have only to say so, and every information shall be given to you. Whether you accept it or reject it, think of it. If you awake in the silence and solitude of night, think of it then. If any remembrance ever comes into your mind of any time when you were innocent and very different, think of it then. If you should be softened by a moment’s recollection of any tenderness or affection you have ever felt, or that has ever been shown to you, or of any kind word that has ever been spoken to you, think of it then. If ever your poor heart is moved to feel, truly, what you might have been, and what you are, oh think of it then, and consider what you may be yet !

‘Believe me that I am, indeed,

‘YOUR FRIEND.’

(To be continued.)

FILMING A VOLCANO.

BY C. LESTOCK REID, F.R.G.S., F.R.E.S.

THERE is, perhaps, nothing in Nature more terrifying than a volcano. In eruption, when mingled smoke and steam belch forth lurid with the reflection of the furnace beneath; when the lava streams, rivers of liquid fire, crawl inexorably down the slopes and spread like a destructive fan over the flat country beyond; when great molten rocks and clouds of ashes are hurled hundreds of feet into the air and the world around shakes with the thunders of the eruption, it is awe-inspiring as a horrible, incredible dream.

But in repose, when the lazy smoke-wreaths, Nature's warning-notice to trespassers in her own domain, drift above the boiling mud seething and bubbling far down in the depths of the crater, and the continuous muttering of imprisoned fires sounds a perpetual note of menace, it is almost more terrible with its suggestion of latent merciless power, of implacable sleeping forces which in a moment may wake to devastating life. One may approach it with due precautions, gaze with mingled horror and admiration on its awful beauties, but one does not feel inclined lightly to play tricks with it.

Yet nothing is sacred to the cinematograph camera, and the volcano of Bromo in Java was recently used as the 'set' in a film, the *mise en scène* of a section of a movie, by three men who risked a horrible death for a few hundred feet of negative. And succeeded.

The Bromo is the most impressive volcano even in that home of volcanoes, Java, which boasts 125, thirteen active, not including Krakatoa, the greatest volcano in the world, an island by itself between Java and Sumatra; and, after Krakatoa, is perhaps one of the most impressive in the world. Yet it is only one of two subsidiary cones in a titanic, long-extinct crater which in its day must have been a veritable lake of fire, but is now a flat expanse of dried mud and powdered lava known as the Sand Sea. To reach it one stays at a delightful little mountain village called Tosari, where one may hire ponies to carry one over the 15 miles of appalling roads that lie between village and volcano;

and hither, at the beginning of last March, we three, K—, M—, and myself, repaired, motoring from Sourabaya, first across the wide, pleasant, marvellously cultivated plains of Java, then up a road which was not so much a road as an almost continuous series of gigantic hairpin bends, climbing 8,000 feet in 18 miles from tropical vegetation to the pinewoods and flowers of temperate regions.

We reached Tosari about four-thirty, changed hastily into thick English suits which feel so curious after months of the thinnest tussore or shorts and open shirts, ordered coolies and ponies for the next day and settled down gladly in front of a wood-fire while torrents of rain beat on the iron roof of the hotel and a chilly Scotch mist darkened the windows; mounting those same ponies next morning at five and setting off through the cold (and it can be bitterly cold at Tosari) dim light of dawn with coolies and Indian servants carrying cameras and other impedimenta.

I had got up rather earlier than the other two, partly because I was in charge of the expedition and wished to satisfy myself that the transport was in order, partly because—less worthy reason—I wanted to pick the best pony for myself. The virtue of early rising was on this occasion not rewarded. On looks it *was* the best pony, but on performance—in the course of a life-time seldom long detached from horses I have come across a good many fools, but nothing to touch that chestnut. Uphill he stumbled, downhill he slithered—admitted the track was very slippery, but the other ponies made nothing of it—and, as there is only about a mile of flat in the whole fifteen, he did not do much to increase the pleasure of the expedition.

Not that it needed increasing. There is something extraordinarily revivifying and elating in being on a high mountain in the splendour of an equatorial dawn, the steep hillside falling away thousands of feet, every one of them cultivated in a kind of fly-footed husbandry, down to Java spread out below us like a green distant map, intersected with shining rivers, bounded by the shimmering sea, with the great mountain of Ajuno, another volcano though passive, behind us, soaring in splendid symmetry up into the pale clear skies of morning.

In the long, steep, straggling street clinging to the sides of a precipice which forms Tosari the road was wide and fairly good, bordered with huts outside which chilly-looking native children, huddled in blankets, gazed at us with eyes stupid with cold and

sleepiness ; but just at the outskirts of the village where we caught up a Dutch party, two men and a very pretty girl in breeches, setting out to walk to the crater, it began to degenerate, though never ceasing to climb through an avenue of pinewoods till it reached the Bromo Pass.

This pass, presumably so called because it is nowhere near the Bromo volcano, looks out over a deep, heavily wooded valley to another ridge on the far side ; and the road, abandoning all pretensions, becomes merely a rough slimy track, dropping with a suddenness that gravely disconcerted my pony to a flattish half-mile, rather spoilt as a gallop by dozens of most inadequately bridged streams, and climbing again, even more steeply, up an unpleasant cross between a waterfall and a staircase, to the Mongaell Pass.

Here, at the bidding of our guide, we left the main track and struggled up a short side turning that ended in a kind of natural platform on the very edge of the old giant crater, where we were to halt for breakfast.

There can be few more impressive picnic places in the world. At one's feet the ground falls very nearly sheer about 1,000 feet to the Sand Sea, an enormous expanse of barren desolation, about three miles across, contrasting curiously with the luxuriant vegetation that clings to the cliffs which hem it in in a semicircle. These become lower as they get farther from the Mongaell Pass, eventually filtering out in a narrow valley, like the bed of a long-dry river, that winds away amidst a jumble of old volcanoes, long extinct and covered with greenery, towards Smeroe, the biggest of them all. Straight ahead, almost in the centre of the Sand Sea, stands Batok, a perfect cone, smokeless and lifeless, and the Bromo, irregular in shape, very much alive with columns of smoke, now thinning to a mere wisp, now thickening to a veritable cloud, puffing up into the still air above or drifting down the terrible serrated sides of the mountain. A scene weird and impressive to a degree with a queer quality of unreality about it, so that one feels as if one was looking at a picture drawn to illustrate Dante's *Inferno* rather than at an actual landscape, poised high up above one of the most fertile countries in the world.

The Dutch party had caught us up again—there is a much shorter track for foot-people from Tosari—and, having had our fill of that nightmare view and a more prosaic breakfast, we followed them down the cliff.

This was the worst bit of the whole journey, descending 1,000 feet in about a mile and a half down one of the steepest paths I have ever had the misfortune to be on, its breakneck qualities only tempered by the vegetation clinging everywhere to the face of the cliff and hiding the fact that one was generally slithering about on the edge of a minor precipice. K—— and I had no illusions about it. We dismounted without further ado and led our ponies. M——, with no pretensions to being a horseman, and possibly a little doubtful as to whether if he once got off he would ever get on again, stuck to the saddle; and events proved him right. The pony, admittedly the surest-footed of the lot, never made a false step, and he arrived at the bottom considerably fresher than we did.

We got our own back as soon as we reached level ground by kicking our remounted ponies into a canter, and his at once followed suit, a manoeuvre which nearly settled his doubts as to dismounting on the spot. He only saved himself by a miracle and followed us at a sober walk while we cantered on until we reached the foot of the Bromo. Here, in the midst of utter desolation, we halted to await M—— and the coolies with the cameras, while the Dutch party made the ascent to the top of the volcano, came down again and started on their way home. They missed a lot of fun.

The actual story or part of the story to be 'shot' was as follows. A villainous person represented by K—— (who certainly succeeded in looking the part before the day was over) had escaped with some vital papers by aeroplane, which the pursuers, M—— and myself, had managed to shoot down—very conveniently in view of the need for an impressive background—from another aeroplane. The first thing to take therefore was K——'s arrival on terra-firma, and he brought off an extremely lifelike imitation of a man falling from some height on to the floor of the Sand Sea at his first attempt: which was lucky for him, for the floor consisted of hundreds of edges of hardened lava, sharp as knife-blades. He cut his knee badly, and when he put his hand down to help himself up he cut that too. A retake would have been, to put it mildly, uncomfortable.

We decided to go easy on actual falls and spent the next hour or so on various shots of the chase over the lower slopes of the volcano, during which M—— was supposed to sprain his ankle, not a difficult thing to do on that appalling surface. Then, leaving the ponies in a deep, dry water- (lava ?) course, sheltered from the

bitter wind, we climbed the outer wall of the crater to do the greatest scene of all, the *pièce de résistance* of the whole film.

The actual outer slope of the Bromo rises about 800 feet from the Sand Sea, at first gently, for the last 600 feet not sheer, but very close to it. The solidified lava is so irregular that it would be perfectly possible, though very unpleasant owing to the sharpness and very dangerous owing to the brittleness, to climb even the sharpest slopes. But in order to facilitate the ascent the Dutch (to whom Java belongs) have built a staircase with a concrete and iron balustrade: a piece of forethought towards travellers for which I have more reason than most people to be thankful. Up this we climbed painfully—there are 251 steps, all very high ones, and to be 10,000 feet above sea-level does not facilitate breathing at the best of times—to emerge at last on a small ledge not more than 12 feet wide, a veritable threshold of the Door of Hell.

Behind us was the slope we had just climbed, steep, jagged and pitiless; before us, steeper yet, another slope, that in many places was sheer cliff, dropped more than a thousand feet into an awful fathomless pit of boiling mud, half-hidden by smoke clouds, simmering and murmuring like a gigantic sinister steam kettle: and on that tiny platform we were to stage a desperate fight, first K—and I, then M—as well, having mysteriously recovered from his sprained ankle enough to climb the slopes (there was no staircase in the film) and join in the ‘struggle to the death’ which was to end in the villain plunging down the abyss to a well-merited and awful doom.

‘Struggle to the death’! It looked as if the scenario writer far away in peaceful England had perpetrated a *mot juste*, or as K—gloomily remarked as he sat down on a hummock of lava and nursed his wounded knee:

‘This is beyond a joke. If you go over one side it’s certain hospital, if you go over the other it’s certain death. And damned unpleasant either way.’

Admitted; but having come a good many thousand miles to take this particular scene it seemed a pity to funk it at the last moment, and with a good many secret misgivings we made our preparations. The camera was securely lashed to the top of the balustrade, K—got ready to pitch the portfolio into the chasm, I crawled up over the other edge of the platform and leapt on him, seizing his uplifted arm. The somewhat foolhardy wrestling match began.

The mind works in queer ways. A moment before we would have given a good deal to go down the stairway and home to Tosari; a moment later in the excitement of the struggle, which in some strange fashion had become real, we had forgotten everything save the necessity of seizing or of retaining that portfolio. It sounds incredible, but it remains a fact which K—— would bear out.

We were brought back to remarkably grim reality by a warning shout from one of the Indian servants, and looking down, found the crater literally beneath our feet already half over the crumbling edge.

'For God's sake, look out!' I shouted. 'We're over.'

We unclinchd by mutual, tacit, instantaneous consent and hurled ourselves backwards. K—— was caught by one of the servants and subsided, ungently but safely, on the platform. I was less lucky. In the panic desire to escape that yawning crater I forgot the other edge.

And went over it.

Though this side was not sheer, the slope was so steep that, once one started rolling down it, only one thing short of a miracle would stop one: and that one thing, after about 20 painful feet and the worst few seconds of my life, I struck and, striking, clung to, as a drowning man clings to a spar, the balustrade of the staircase. That is why I am more grateful than most people to the man who built it. If he had not built it, if I had rolled the other way—well, this article would never have been written, at least not by me.

After a brief period spent in pleased amazement at being alive after all, I climbed on to the staircase and back to the ledge, where I insisted, politely but firmly, that we had expended quite enough feet on that phase of the struggle. M——, who was producer as well as actor, was inclined to disagree, but K——, not unnaturally, backed me up nobly.

'You do your share of this blinking wrestling match,' we suggested in unison. 'And then see what you think about retakes.'

So the stage was set again, this time with K—— and me struggling on the ground. As per story he gradually asserted his superior strength, got uppermost and slowly forced me backwards into the crater till my shoulders were over the edge, an unpleasant position which I bore with comparative equanimity because of the comforting knowledge that there was, this time, a rope round my ankles,

held up by a stout coolie : but I confess to a moment's apprehension as to how that gentleman's mental or physical equipment, neither apparently very great, would react to a sudden jerk on the rope. Anyhow, it was not put to the test. When M—— (in the story) came to my rescue, I was able to roll out of danger and the eye of the camera, leaving him and K—— to finish their fictitious argument to everybody's satisfaction and with no further moments of extreme danger, though none of it was exactly safe.

So to the supreme moment of all, where the baffled villain falls backward into the abyss. K—— had a bad moment when, in a close-up, he had to throw up his arms and fall backwards away from the camera and towards the crater's edge, an expression of frantic, desperate terror on his face : and, although I and an Indian servant, crouching down by the tripod, had each firm hold of one of his ankles, it is perhaps not altogether surprising that the said expression was singularly lifelike.

The actual shots of his body as it hurtled, twisting and turning, into the ghastly furnace below were, of course, done by means of a dummy ; a dummy which displayed a most human unwillingness to play its part. It would insist on sticking on a narrow ledge about thirty feet down, but not far enough to be out of the picture, and no self-respecting film hero could leave his enemy thus poised midway to destruction, quite apart from the fact that the ledge was obviously too narrow and brittle to hold a real body.

We were all agreed on that point. The point we were not agreed on was who should go down and fetch it back again. Each of us produced cogent arguments why the other man should go, till what might have been an interminable discussion on the subject was diverted by one of the coolies volunteering to go down himself. Nobody argued with him. We merely insisted on tying a rope round his waist, though he was perfectly ready to make the descent without, for those Tosari coolies, their hard bare toes giving them an extraordinary grip on the rough lava, treat the volcano with complete levity. But it is one thing to cling like a fly with hands and feet free, quite another to do it carrying an unwieldy dummy the size of a man. If once he did lose his balance—and besides, we had not got a spare dummy ! So he was let down, not once but several times, until eventually the dummy fell clear out of the picture, and even then paid a final visit to get the clothes in which it was dressed for his own personal use. He certainly deserved them.

Heavy clouds were now gathering ominously along the edge of the old crater and, though we had not quite finished, we had no desire to be caught up there by a Scotch mist. We packed up and started homewards, but were still in the Sand Sea when we were caught not by mist, but by torrential rain which did not improve the climb up the cliff wall to Mongaell, a matter of leading the ponies and very strenuous work too at that altitude; nor did it improve the subsequent ride home through the dripping forest, a ride which was somehow comically reminiscent of hacking home on a wet night after hunting. Except that, however wet and cold one may be at the moment, one wants to go hunting again; and, personally, I had no desire to see the Bromo again.

Unfortunately, though we had got most of the scenes and, thank Heaven, all the really dangerous ones, finished, there were still various gaps to be filled in to get the perfect picture for which we had risked so much. So, next morning, the same programme had to be gone through again and, alas! on the same ponies: no eloquence of mine would induce either of the others to swap with me. But I had discovered, more or less by accident, that the chestnut kept his feet better if he was going some pace, so, now knowing the road, I pushed on ahead of the others through the magic of a wonderful morning, exquisite pearly lights in the sky and a high, keen wind racing round the mountain-tops and shouting through the trees, to the top of the Bromo Pass: where I found that the difficulties of filming in Java are not all volcanic.

A polite little man in the uniform of the Javanese police, armed to the teeth with sword and revolver, stepped out of the bushes, accompanied by two subordinates similarly clad and*equipped, and began a long discourse in Malay. After pacifying the chestnut, which had a true equine horror of ambushes, I tried to make out what he was talking about, but my Malay was a fairly recent acquisition and his was high-flown, different to the Singapore variety. So I dismounted to wait for the arrival of K—, who spoke the language fluently and refused to continue the discussion: I had a pretty shrewd suspicion of its general drift.

Earlier in the expedition, which had come down from Burma through Siam to Indo-China, we had, in the last-named country, had the misfortune to fall out with the French authorities. The whys and wherefores of this quarrel are irrelevant—indeed, we never really discovered ourselves what all the trouble was about—

but the upshot was that the French got the totally erroneous idea that we were spies working under the rather thin disguise of a cinematograph expedition and took the gratuitously impertinent step of cabling their absurd suspicions on to the Dutch: so that when, after weeks of facilities and courtesy in Singapore, we arrived in Batavia we found ourselves once more 'undesirable characters.' The purser of the Dutch boat on which we travelled added his little bit to the general atmosphere of suspicion by stating that he was perfectly certain that I personally was a Communist, 'because I wore an eyeglass'; though what the precise connection between Moscow and monocles may be I have never discovered. We had apparently settled the matter satisfactorily with an extremely courteous and intelligent Dutchman in Batavia, but it cropped up again in Semarang and again in Sourabaya, where we eventually landed, and, so far as I could see, here it was cropping up again.

K— confirmed this idea after a few minutes' conversation with the policeman, who explained that he had orders to prevent our taking any films.

'But we have permission.'

'Where is the permit?'

Of course we had not got a written permit; the Dutch authorities have a great gift for bestowing verbal permits which they forget all about the next day. So after a long, though perfectly friendly chat, it was eventually decided that the police should come on with us to the crater and censor the film on the spot, so to speak, with full rights to stop the filming of anything in the nature of 'a fight between white man and brown,' the very idea of which drove French and Dutch authorities alike into a perfect fever of panic. We did not think it necessary to inform him that we had got 90 per cent. of the stuff we wanted the previous day, and, for the sake of his peace of mind, I am glad to say that he apparently never found out.

We continued our journey, feeling positively regal. The three foot policemen marched in front, two mounted men who, unknown to me, had joined the tail of the procession at Tosari, brought up the rear, and, somewhere *en route*, our escort received a further reinforcement in the shape of two plain-clothes men, one of whom quite spoilt the effect of his otherwise excellent disguise of coolie clothes by insisting on carrying his official sword umbrella-wise in the crook of his arm. Any faint shadow of respect that we may

have entertained for the Dutch native police was completely dissipated by this clown.

The whole bunch of them accompanied us not only to the Sand Sea, but, with the exception of one horseman who stayed behind to hold the police ponies, up to the top of the crater. What they expected to achieve I cannot imagine, for, once there, they paid not the faintest attention to any of our doings, squatting for the most part hunched up with their backs to the camera. I believe we could have staged any fight we liked, thrown all the coolies one by one into the volcano, without arousing any protest on their part; and, long before we had finished, they got bored with the whole proceedings and cleared off, all except the clown, who, still cuddling his sword, remained with us to the end.

There was no particular danger involved in this day's work. Even the silhouette, taken from below, of K—— and myself fighting on the edge, while effective enough with the background of white smoke belching up out of the crater, involved no particular risk; though, if we had not had the previous day's experience, we might have considered it unpleasant enough. By midday we had climbed down that blessed staircase for the last time and were lunching comfortably in the shelter of the nullah preparatory to starting home with a reasonable hope of getting back to the hotel before the usual afternoon rain. A hope that was justified, if only just, by events. The rain started that evening and did not stop again for thirty-six hours, so that the following day when we rested from our labours at the hotel, surrounded by a thick wall of cloud, it would have been impossible to get to the Bromo at all, much less take photographs.

Nature had been very kind to us: and, indeed, looking back on those three days I am astounded at our luck throughout. We were lucky in our weather: lucky in striking such a remarkably intelligent or remarkably stupid (I am not sure which it ought to be) policeman: lucky in escaping with nothing worse than cuts and bruises—we had plenty of them—when a single false step might so easily have meant and so nearly did mean instant and horrible death to one or other of us: and, above all, lucky in the behaviour of the volcano, which poured out enough smoke to put beyond question that it was a volcano, yet never got really nasty.

I have sometimes wondered what would have happened if we had been caught at the top or even in the Sand Sea by a sudden eruption. The Dutch meteorological authorities claim to know

pretty well when an eruption is due: they have to in a region where one eruption can blow away half a good-sized island in a series of explosions audible 3,000 miles away and spread its ashes over all the Eastern Hemisphere as did Krakatoa in 1883, the most stupendous eruption known to history. But they are not infallible and, as the last thing we wanted to do was to advertise our presence there, we could not ask them about it.

Still, all's well that ends well; and, though when the film is at last released after the endless delays apparently inseparable from that process, nine-tenths of the audience will probably think these scenes a fake and murmur comfortably from their arm-chair: 'Of course they weren't really in any danger,' I am certain that, whatever else we forget, neither K—— nor I will ever forget that nightmare moment when we felt our feet slipping on the crater's edge and looked down into the fiery mouth of Hell hundreds of feet directly below us.

SUCCESS.

BY HUMFREY JORDAN.

STANDING squarely in front of the empty fireplace, Hicks stared at a filing cabinet in the corner of the office. Before he forced a decision from the man who sat at the writing-table drawing patterns on the blotting-pad, he wished to satisfy himself on one point: the extent of his own folly in associating himself with such a fool. On the whole he considered that folly not beyond remedy. He looked from the filing cabinet to his companion.

'Well, Cople?' he asked.

Cople ceased to draw on the blotting-pad, put down the pencil, and leaned back in his chair, picking his words, watching Hicks as he picked them.

'So far as I'm concerned,' he stated, 'it can't be done. That's definite.'

'Why?'

Hicks kept his tone reasonably polite with an effort.

'You propose raising eight thousand on debenture. The assets to cover the debenture exist on paper only. That's why.'

Hicks pushed his hands into his trousers pockets and stuck out a stomach that was already a noticeable feature of his large frame.

'The potential assets of the business cover the eight thousand four times at least,' he declared with vigour.

Francis Cople laughed.

'Potential is a lovely word,' he agreed, 'but it does not shake me.'

'You realise the alternative?'

'Liquidation.'

'With nothing for you, not a penny, out of the failure.'

'Exactly.'

'Good God!'

Hicks could not hold on to politeness in face of a man who contemplated complete failure with well-mannered resignation. Sitting down under defeat infuriated him; the type of idiot who, when things began to go wrong, concentrated his mind on being a good loser made him sick. Cople lacked drive, courage, determina-

tion, ambition; he was not worth soft treatment, but he had got to be handled. Hicks had no intention of being associated with public failure at that stage of his career.

He proceeded to handle the man. Cople was the originator of the proposition, he had found the tin and acquired the concession, did he now say that he had presented false facts from the start? He did not. Good, then the chances were as bright as they always had been? Given the means of exploiting them. Naturally, but there was profit in exploiting them? Probably. Not probably, if Cople's facts were right, which they were. Because the markets had been against them, because wholly unforeseen but temporary difficulties had arisen. . . .

Here Hicks was interrupted. Cople got out of his chair and sat on the table. His face showed worry, but determination.

'Cut that out,' he begged. 'You are not selling me shares in the company now. This debenture money would have to go in satisfying creditors and keeping the show alive while we tried to sell it, wouldn't it?'

'Why not? It's saleable.'

Cople moved uneasily, but he held firmly to his conversational tone.

'The assets securing the debenture are under the ground,' he stated, 'the money raised would not be sufficient and would not be used to make them marketable. So I'm not on.'

The timidity of the man infuriated Hicks.

'You prefer to let down your partner,' he suggested. 'Afraid?'

'If you like.'

'Good thing you did give up the army.'

Cople smiled; the suggestion seemed to provide him with genuine amusement.

'I've always thought so.'

But Hicks intended to stir his man somehow; he tried again.

'Mining clearly isn't your game?'

'Apparently not.'

'Play for safety, old man. At odd times I've heard you talk a lot about flowers. Take to gardening.'

Cople failed to prevent himself from flushing.

'It would be very pleasant.'

'You've got the private means, of course?'

That one scored. Hicks was pleased to see the reserve of a caste torn aside for a moment. Cople's eyes showed him that what

he had guessed was right. The fellow was going to be uncomfortably hard hit by this failure. But as he did not answer, Hicks hit again.

'But,' he explained, 'there is no real need to make such heavy weather of it. Get back East again. Go on with the donkey work. Get your facts in better shape.'

Cople looked at him eagerly.

'How——?' he began.

Hicks was pleased with that eager interruption; in his view it made the issue certain.

'Leave that to me,' he said. 'Leave everything to me. I won't double cross you, and I'll see that a timid absentee is exonerated if, in the remote event of failure, there is trouble with debenture holders. That do you?'

Cople got off the table; his face was very angry, but he kept his voice level.

'No, damn you, it won't,' he said.

Hicks chuckled; he was getting on.

'Difficult to please to-day,' he suggested. 'Give me till to-morrow. I'll make a proposal then. You can clear out, leaving your facts and your guarantee of their accuracy, nothing more, in. I want to work out what I can offer you for your shares. Any scruples there—or fears?'

Cople walked over to a peg and unhooked his hat.

'None,' he answered, 'provided that my name cannot be used to cover facts which are not mine. When you make your proposal I shall be able to judge how much I have to thank you for it.'

After Cople had closed the door behind him, Hicks fitted a cigarette into a long amber holder, but forgot to light it. A timid partner complicated things, where he did not want complication. The people from whom he proposed to raise money to keep the tin venture alive must not know of that timidity. He hoped to be able to satisfy them that Cople was retiring because he refused to live out East again and there was no job for him at home. The grim jest of the business was that Cople did not appear to realise how good the venture really was. He had allowed himself to panic because it was necessary to do a little dressing-up to raise money. Dressing up was only dangerous when there was nothing to be dressed. A complete fool. Worried at failure, really hard hit by it, but without the guts to take it by the throat and squeeze success from it. An indeterminate creature, not able to get what he wanted, very likely uncertain what he did want, born to fail.

Herbert Hicks lit his cigarette and went out to lunch. He proposed, because he liked food and had a lot of difficult work ahead, to do himself well. It amused him to imagine Cople taking a frugal meal, economising because he was in difficulties. Yet the fellow had something in the nature of a private income, a small capital on which he could draw in case of need. Hicks had nothing, or practically nothing but his wits and his ambition. So one lunched well and the other badly. Typical. The bad luncher would fail all the way through. Bound to. That had been a happy shot, and it had got there nicely. Gardening or looking after chickens, some venturesome undertaking of that sort was just the man's form.

Two years later Herbert Hicks gave himself dinner at the Savoy. He had been working desperately hard ; it was Saturday night ; and he needed relaxation.

There were times when he was awed by the size of the fortune which a man could make out of war ; but the business demanded work. Long hours, unceasing thought, enterprise and energy : without those there could be nothing but minor pickings. But he had those, and he was gathering more than pickings. Where other men of his age had hesitated, he had taken a firm grasp and kept his hold. The War had come opportunely. He had parted with the tin enterprise at a big profit and had got into clothing and tinned foods before the rush ; with those behind him, yielding an almost unbelievable return, he was in a position to explore various sidelines. Some of the sidelines were already major concerns ; not one of them was a failure. But supplying what the nation needed entailed labour ; ensuring that the nation did not grab too large a toll from the profits of supply entailed more than labour, it was wearing. He had always intended to make a fortune, a large one ; yet the making of it involved strain. When people talked about tired soldiers, Hicks was always slightly amused. He wondered what the soldiers would think of his working day.

The Savoy restaurant in war-time had much attraction for him. He liked to go there occasionally alone ; eat a carefully chosen dinner ; watch the crowd about him. Studying the men on leave, reacting to luxury and comfort, getting the flavour of warmth and light and sound as eagerly as they get the flavour of food and wine, was a stimulation after work. Watching the men's womenfolk, placing the relationships, discovering in the wife, the sister, or the mistress a common trait of ministering almost feverishly to a man's

enjoyment was a fine tonic. Picking out the men who used their uniforms as a shelter from danger was interesting. There were plenty of such men, officers who, in the current phrase, swung it with both hands, twisting and turning from the trenches, calling themselves soldiers. For such people Hicks had immeasurable contempt; he dealt with a lot of them and tried to let them know his feelings. They were fools; and he hated fools. They had wobbled at the start when wobbling was fatal; they deserved the constant anxiety which ruled them. Hicks was invariably pleased when one of such fellows missed a twist and was sent to a fighting unit. War demanded that a man should know his own mind. At the start a decision about it had been possible; later it became more difficult. Hicks had decided at the start. He intended to use the War, not to let it use him. He used it, finding it extremely easy when the need arose to establish his immunity from military service on the score of national usefulness. Any reasonably able man could do the same thing. Wobblers who wanted both uniforms and whole skins were contemptible in their folly. He avoided service because it had always been his ambition to make a fortune and the certainty of making it was thrown at his head. When people assumed that he avoided service because he was a coward, they provided him with real amusement.

Hicks finished his cocktail, pressed the end of his cigarette into an ash tray, and moved from the lounge into the restaurant to the small table beside a pillar which he usually had reserved for him when he dined alone. As he sat down, he heard a familiar voice. At the other side of the pillar a party of four was finishing dinner; Francis Cople appeared to be the host.

Cople was wearing the crowns of a major on his shoulder straps. His hair was greyer than it had been when he had abandoned the tin enterprise in panic two years before; but his back was turned and Hicks could not see his face. Beside him was a girl with a newish wedding ring. Cople, presumably, had made a war marriage, and had picked an attractive wife. The other two of the party were a gunner captain and a girl, a girl without particular distinction. Hicks listened, and caught something of their talk. It was of roses. He very nearly laughed, remembering that he had once roused Cople successfully by telling him he ought to take to gardening. The fancy to see the signs of war on the face of the soldier who talked of roses took him. Perhaps, though he did not think the man would be for all his timidity, the fellow was trying to shelter in a uniform.

Hicks got up and went to renew an acquaintance. Cople's greeting was polite, no more and no less. He stood up and shook hands, but he made no attempt at any introduction. A very new ribbon of the Military Cross was on his tunic and his face showed lines that Hicks had not seen before; he wore the badge of an infantry regiment.

When he had asked whether Cople was on leave from France and had been told that he was, Hicks referred to tin.

'You ought not to have left the company,' he said. 'It has turned out very well.'

'Indeed,' Cople answered. 'You still in it?'

He kept contempt from his eyes and from his voice; but it amused Hicks to recognise from the fellow's manner the existence of the contempt.

'No,' he said. 'Too busy making money in other ways. Is my guess right? Have you married?'

'Yes,' Cople replied.

He glanced at the girl beside him, but made no introduction. That amused Hicks again.

'Well,' he said. 'I won't keep you. Theatre, I expect. The best of luck.'

'Thanks,' Cople answered.

Hicks went back to his table satisfied. He had made no mistake about Cople, an indeterminate creature. The fellow had achieved a weak compromise. Faced with a blatant profiteer, whom he had reason to dislike on other grounds as well, he had not the determination to show his feelings, all he could achieve was keeping his wife from contaminating contact. A poor effort. Had their positions been reversed Hicks was very sure that he would have handed out to the profiteer a phrase guaranteed to give pain. But Cople was a man who could not deal in positive results because he lacked drive and ambition. An obvious failure.

Having finished his soup, while waiting for the fish, Hicks gave his attention to the scene about him. Not an empty table; the lounge filled with people waiting to dine; everybody spending money lavishly. He wished he had something in the hotel company. Then Cople's party passed him, going out, and did not look towards him. Cople was worn and tired, but there was a look of content in his eyes which used not to be there. Under the circumstances, a few days' leave and then back to something damnable, marriage could scarcely be responsible for the look. Could service?

Hicks supposed it could. A fellow of that type would welcome orders, although the price of obeying them was death. The one thing he could never do would be to choose his own path and walk it alone. So war had come and made Cople a contented failure. Curious.

After the War Herbert Hicks took the first definite step towards obtaining a baronetcy by forming a committee which endeavoured to find occupation for demobilised officers. Under Hicks' chairmanship the committee did good work. It co-operated successfully with the other organisations doing similar work, but it formed its own rules and followed its own lines. No seeker of employment appeared before the committee unless his record suggested that he was very definitely employable; when he did appear his case became the personal concern of the members. It was said, after the committee had been working for a few weeks, that anyone who got as far as an interview was certain of a good job. But the men who obtained interviews formed a very small part of those who sought them. Sir Herbert Hicks, he had obtained a K.B.E. about the time of the Armistice for public services, had insisted on that.

'We shall crab the whole show,' he maintained, 'if we allow pity for failures to affect us. By keeping the standard high we shall get results. Shoot a lot of duds at our acquaintance and the thing is useless. When we do pick a fellow we have got to plant him. Far better that way. We'll choose the candidates for interview ourselves.'

His colleagues agreed to that. Although it entailed much discussion of records and references, it worked well. After nine months or so the six members of the committee were pleased with themselves for having made so few mistakes. They intended to raise rather than lower their standard.

Francis Cople's name and record came before them about that time. From the record Hicks was able to fill in gaps. But the whole was not inspiring. A good school, then a regular commission in the infantry. Resignation for financial reasons, his father having died and left very little for his children. Employed with a tin company in the F.M.S. Resigned that to attempt a venture independently. Resigned from the new company owing to differences of opinion with his fellow-director. Got a job as an office manager in another tin company in Burma. References from that company lukewarm. On leave when the War broke out. War record satisfactory. Commanded a battalion in France for the last

eighteen months. Wounded twice. M.C. and one mention. Army chits good but a little cold. Married: one child.

When the committee had acquainted themselves with that record, Pope, one of the members, shook his head.

'His references use the term painstaking too often for my liking,' he said.

'Certainly,' another member agreed, 'one gets the impression of a rather pedestrian person. Not our type. We want to give good men a good chance.'

'That tin company he started,' a third member suggested. 'If we consider the case further we ought to know more about that. There was, apparently, initiative there. But we ought to know about the quarrel with the other director and the ultimate fate of the company.'

Sir Herbert Hicks sat back in his chair at the end of the table and stared for a moment at the ceiling.

'The company,' he stated, 'has done and is doing very well. I was the other director.'

Pope looked at him and smiled.

'You are giving us no other lead?' he asked.

'No. If you had taken him up, I might have. As it is, I agree with you. Not our type. But I'll see what I can do privately.'

So Cople received by the same post a communication expressing the regret of the committee at being unable to assist him and a letter from Sir Herbert Hicks asking him to call at a millionaire's office.

Hicks found making money after the War a not less heavy demand upon his time than it had been during the years of fighting, but he gave the man who had once been a too timid partner five minutes of close attention. To his question about what the fellow wished to do, he got the answer he had expected.

'Anything to make a living,' Cople answered.

But there was no longer any content in the man's eyes: he looked older than his thirty-eight years and very worried.

'Better have our facts clear,' Hicks suggested. 'Are you in absolute necessity of earning a living?'

'I am,' Cople replied.

That finished the interview. Hicks wanted to do something, but he was at a loss where to place the indeterminate creature, certainly not in any of his own businesses. At lunch, while he ate some oysters which were delightfully fat, he had an inspiration which struck him as humorous. Gardening, he had always pro-

phesied it. The soldier who talked of roses. Really funny. That afternoon he found time to see a friend, who considered himself the first seedsman and nurseryman in England.

'Got a tame colonel for you, Bill,' he told the friend. 'Honest, painstaking, not wholly a fool. Knows something about flowers I believe. If you could fix him with a job, anything in reason, I'd take it as a personal favour.'

A few days later when he informed Cople that he had found him a billet in Holman's, four pounds ten a week, if that were any good to him, Hicks was astonished. The news brought back something of the look of content into Cople's eyes. The fellow's pleasure was disconcerting. Hicks found himself apologising for the smallness of the wage. That any man of Cople's standing should jump at a pittance of that sort was uncomfortable.

'It's not the immediate wage,' Cople declared, almost allowing eagerness to rid him of his natural reserve. 'It's the chance.'

'Naturally,' Hicks agreed, 'in a big concern like Holman's there is always the chance to make a future. Hope you do.'

He glanced at the clock on the mantelpiece of his office; and Cople rose from his chair.

'I shall not forget that you have put this in my way,' he said. 'But I'm rather bad at thanks, Hicks.'

He left the office with a briskness in his movements that had not been there when he came in. Before Sir Herbert Hicks settled to business again he sat for at least two minutes thinking of Cople. He was genuinely sorry for the fellow. Good manners, a reserve that hid emptiness, the absence rather than the disguise of deep feelings of any sort, ambition to be able to keep up the appearances of his class. That pretty well summed him up. Horrid. And the poor creature talked of a chance. To earn as much, possibly, as ten pounds a week. Pitiable. Far better for him to have died in the War and been remembered as a hero. Living involved making the brand of failure more obvious with each succeeding year.

Sir Herbert Hicks, Bt., K.B.E., walked out of the house in Harley Street trying to imagine that he was not relieved at an excuse. But he had accustomed himself to a reasonable degree of mental honesty, the habit of facing facts was set, and he failed to imagine that. He was glad of the excuse.

Another habit, exhibiting masterfulness, had led him to attempting to impress his doctor.

'Facts,' he had told the man, 'cut short and shorn of fancy language, that is what I want. I'm neither a coward nor a fool.'

So after a thorough examination he had got what he asked for.

'Chronic dyspepsia,' the doctor had stated. 'Probably due to over-working, over-feeding, under-exercising. Careful diet and a healthy life might cure you, it will almost certainly improve your condition. I guarantee nothing except that a continuance of your present life will make you worse. Give your body the first claim on your attention and, in my opinion, the odds are in favour of you living to old age with no more than occasional trifling abdominal discomfort.'

He had paused at that, and glanced at his patient with a smile.

'I hope,' he had finished, 'that I have been successful in avoiding fancy language and fancy ideas, Sir Herbert.'

'You have,' Hicks had assured him, returning the smile.

But he would have liked a little sympathy for a masterful man with a pain in his stomach. There had been no absolute guarantee that the pain would go.

Before he paid his fee to the doctor's secretary he was aware that finding an excuse had been at the back of his mind for some time. Walking across the hall he had almost persuaded himself that having the excuse thrust at him was distasteful. Crossing the pavement to his car he abandoned that fiction. Driving home to his flat, his thoughts were concerned with investments.

Hicks found his wife in an Adams drawing-room. She was alone and reading, carefully posed even in loneliness so that the lines of her face and figure grouped gracefully. Hicks thought her dress hideous in its severity; he supposed the woman inside it had claims on beauty. He hated the Adams room; it was not his idea of comfort, its studied effects annoyed him. Hating the woman would have been something of a relief; despising her was a bloodless performance.

Angela Hicks looked up from her book as he came in; she did not comment on his being back early.

'Tea, Herbert?' she asked, stretching out a much manicured hand towards the bell.

'It gives me a pain to eat or drink,' Hicks stated.

'Your indigestion,' his wife answered, politely. 'You really ought to see somebody about it.'

'I have.'

'Who?'

'That fellow Bolton.'

'They say he's very good.'

'He says that I have got to retire from work.'

Hicks shot that out abruptly, and watched the effect with care. It produced, he thought, satisfactory alarm.

'Surely,' his wife suggested, with quiet reasonableness, 'you mean take things more easily, Herbert. Doing nothing would never suit you.'

'Neither would a smaller income suit you,' Hicks answered.

The answer to that was a smile of forbearance, but he believed that he had scored. She did not concern herself with his occupations, but she liked to pretend she did. The lie that she would find the inspiration and interest of life as easily in poverty as in riches never appeared to her stupid. It did to Hicks. He amused himself by stirring it to show itself.

'Naturally,' he insisted, 'my retirement will entail reduced expenditure. But I shall have enough for reasonable comfort, I hope.'

She looked at him and could not entirely eliminate anxiety from the look. 'I expect so,' she said. 'Nobody could call you an unambitious man, Herbert.'

'Translated,' he answered, 'that means that you are confident that I shall remain a money maker. I am afraid, my dear, that your confidence is misplaced.'

He left her to consider that, pleased that her pose was less graceful than it had been when he entered the extremely Adams room. It was fortunate that she had not got to the stage of asking what was really wrong with him. Chronic dyspepsia was something too popularly associated with his kind to be impressive.

Having sown a satisfactory seed of anxiety in his wife, he went to the quietest of his clubs and found a small room where silence was obligatory empty. His stomach was giving him considerable discomfort; he wished to think out the problems attaching to the business of making it permanently comfortable. He might have to admit a certain degree of failure when he had reviewed the situation, but not necessarily.

His marriage, for instance; there was no failure there. He had a son, a small boy who was starting life very much more advantageously than he had himself. His wife was considered a successful hostess and acknowledged a beauty of the classical-featured, bloodless variety. When Angela had agreed to marry a blatant profiteer,

when he had decided that her breeding and position were what he required to assist his career, they had both approached the bargain with their eyes open. Modifications of any bargain were usual. That Angela was and remained a physical iceberg necessitated certain adjustments. Mercifully after a brief and unsatisfactory period of cohabitation she released him from that obligation. Had she pretended that she wished him to remain her husband in the physical sense the situation would have been intolerable. There would have been some obligation on him to lay occasional siege to the iceberg. Disgusting. Fortunately that was about the one pretence which she did avoid. She pretended ignorance of the fact that he satisfied his body with other women; she pretended that his war record rendered him a person whom she could respect; she pretended that it was not money alone that she asked from him; she pretended to admire his achievement, not his fortune. For those pretences he despised her. But she was decorative, a credit to him in public places, and an admirable manager of his houses. In a practical world, shorn of romance, he refused to call his marriage anything but a satisfactory bargain.

That other vastly more important part of his life, his career, was not so easy to value. Starting with very little, the son of a country solicitor with a big family and a small capital, he had arrived at being worth something over three-quarters of a million. Supposing he did retire, weeded out the doubtful assets, got everything in order where it could remain, he would be worth quite that. A rich man, a very rich man, judged by one standard. From another point of view, his own, not a rich man. At various times mines, food, clothing, shipping and a dozen other things had occupied him and enriched him, but they had only been means. He had created and developed no industry. Finance, money was his business. Three-quarters of a million was not big money in the world in which he had managed to place himself. That world only considered big money, and it was the world of his choice and his ambition. In any other he was a stranger. Therefore . . . he deliberately avoided drawing the only conclusion.

His stomach was comparatively easy, but he was hungry. If he satisfied his hunger his digestion made his life a misery. There was the excuse for never drawing the only conclusion. He would always be able to say, with truth, that his body had robbed him of the big money.

Hicks went from the small room where members might not

he speak, to the coffee-room and dined frugally, finding it depressing to watch other members eating dishes of which he was extremely fond. A dinner of steamed fish and fruit gave him an unpleasant thought. He had always attached considerable importance to food. Beyond making money, had he attached considerable importance to anything else? Recreation: gluttony. His sense of humour was not equal to facing that absurd description. He wondered why it had come into his head.

A casual club acquaintance sat down at the next table to him and passed a casual greeting.

'You're not looking particularly fit, Hicks,' he said. 'Nothing serious, I hope.'

'My doctor tells me,' Hicks stated, 'that I've got to retire from work. I find the prospect far from pleasant.'

The casual acquaintance gave that information the attention which politeness demanded, nothing more.

'Naturally you would,' he answered. 'Not a man with country tastes, are you?'

Even the steamed fish was quarrelling with Hicks' stomach; it made him want to ask curtly what the hell the country had to do with it. But because he desired to talk about himself he replied mildly.

'No,' he said. 'My business has not left me much time for outside tastes.'

'Unfortunate,' the casual acquaintance murmured, and hailed another member passing the table. 'Here you are, Sam,' he said. 'I told Dickson to put you next to me. By the way, I propose going to you for the week-end. Any sort of corner will do, if you are going to be full up. But I want to come. . . .'

Hicks left the coffee-room for one of the smoking-rooms. There he affected an unsuccessful compromise. In consideration of his stomach he denied himself a cigar, but took coffee. His stomach objected to the coffee; but the objection induced uncomfortably clear sight. In the whole range of his acquaintance was there a single man who would really welcome his uninvited arrival for a week-end? He could not name one. His business had not left him much time for friends, not much time for many things of value. . . .

A fortnight later Sir Herbert Hicks was feeling distinctly more cheerful. His stomach was easier, and he was enjoying air and exercise as he had not enjoyed them before. There was something in the country business after all. Life was, anyhow, a compromise.

Given that his stomach would continue to behave itself reasonably he would accept a country cottage as a not unpleasing toy. Run by himself for himself, without his wife and her friends, it promised more than boredom in seeking health. But the most important feature of the business was that the finding of the cottage had restored his sense of value, made his sick man's pessimism look absurd.

Cornwall as a jumping-off place had attracted him ; he had gone down there a couple of days after seeing his doctor. A week of rest and being driven about in his car in excellent summer weather had improved his outlook. The rigid diet which his stomach demanded had left him calm about the catering of English country hotels ; the readiness with which chance acquaintances had recognised him as a wealthy man had been soothing. In Cornwall his three-quarter of a million or so had looked bigger ; in the lounge of an hotel his loneliness was not aggressive. Then he had happened, walking gently for his stomach's sake instead of driving in his car, on a house which took his fancy on the instant. A very small house, squarish, low and veranda-ed, with flowering creepers almost covering it ; set at the head of a creek, well up from the water, with woods backing it, and lawns and trees and many flowers making a garden, not too large, about it ; facing south, sheltered but commanding the sea. Moved by unusual detail of imagination Hicks had seen himself living in the little house, amusing himself in a boat, a motor-boat, on the creek, finding his acquaintance seeking invitations. Looking at the tiny property from a field adjoining it, he had made up his mind quickly. It could be made to do. If the inside was unsatisfactory, his money could supply a new one ; if the owner did not wish to sell, money could talk to him. But the owner was Francis Cople. Discovering that fact had been sheer joy to Hicks ; he had spent many pleasant days quietly investigating the possibilities of the discovery.

Francis Cople, failing apparently to find his chance in Holman's, had left the job which Hicks had found for him two years after getting it. Then he had acquired a small nurseryman's business in Cornwall. The indeterminate fellow, Hicks decided, having failed to earn one had attempted to buy a living at the risk of his small capital. Typical. But the venture seemed to have been moderately successful. Enquiries in the neighbourhood enabled Hicks to get a fair idea of the little nurseryman's business. When he had accounted for a reasonable return on the capital which he was risking in the undertaking, Francis Cople could not be more than

a few hundreds a year better off for his labours than if he had left his money in gilt-edged securities and done nothing. Any considerable expansion of the little business appeared highly improbable. Local information suggested a small tradesman who could never make his trade big. A very fitting fate for an indeterminate failure.

A house agent informed Hicks that Cople had been anxious to sell his little house, but had let the matter of selling slide for the last two years. The agent fancied that business might be looking up; gossip suggested that Cople was developing quite a rose trade. Hicks fancied that money could be made to talk to a born failure. On a Saturday afternoon he went to visit Cople, determined that he would have the fellow's house at a reasonable price. He would be dealing with a man who thought in hundreds or even fifties.

Hicks got out of his car on the road, and walked down to the house along a drive that curved through a belt of trees. The drive wanted mending, there were large holes in it and it was very mossy. The gate needed paint, so did the front door. He could not see much of the gardens, as they were on the other side of the house, but they appeared very carefully kept. Before he got an answer he had to ring the bell four times; he could hear it, an old-fashioned pull affair, clanging in a room to the left of the door. Eventually a small boy let him in with the air of being quite used to such work. In answer to Hicks' enquiry he smiled pleasantly.

'Won't you come in, sir?' he asked. 'Father is in the garden. I'll go and fetch him.'

He showed the visitor across a small square hall into a fair-sized sitting-room with three French windows opening on to the veranda. Having asked Hicks to sit down, having without any sign of being impressed by the title obtained his name, he was going out by one of the windows, when he remembered an omission. Going to a small table he took up a silver box of cigarettes and offered it to the caller.

'I'm sorry I forgot, sir,' he apologised. 'Won't you smoke while you're waiting? Father may be a few minutes. I expect he'll have to wash.'

He smiled again as he imparted that information; and went out by the window. A good-mannered, pleasant-looking child. No mistake in placing him either. A cadet at Dartmouth unless Hicks had lost all powers of observation. Typical again. Francis Cople would pinch and save to turn his son into a naval officer, and proudly imagine that he had given the boy a career. A mild ambition, to put it kindly.

Hicks smoked a cigarette and looked about him, summing up the house. The interior could obviously be suitably adapted; the room he was in was pleasant enough but spoiled by a Victorian marble fireplace. He was, however, more interested in the signs of failure about him. Those were strangely comforting to a man whose stomach was keeping him from really big money. Furniture, pleasing enough in the minor and inexpensive antique way; pictures hardly worth a glance; carpet, curtains, chair covers, on the threadbare side. Few knick-knacks; lots of flowers. Oil lamps and no central heating. Everything highly polished and very clean. The place looked lived in, the room expressed personality; but it was too orderly. Hicks found the answer to that: no servants. The failures looked after themselves and were orderly because it saved work. A little tradesman with no servants but a son in the Navy. Cople, without ambition, indeterminate, would naturally arrive at something of that sort.

Hicks walked to the windows and stepped out on the veranda. Waiting for Cople, summing things up gave him satisfaction. His surroundings gave him a juster and more pleasing idea of his own achievement. The gardens were smaller than he had thought, quite on a miniature scale, but they were certainly well kept. He could imagine Cople labouring in them and thinking it life. To Hicks more than half the plants that produced masses of colour in front of him were nameless; to be able to give them names was Cople's idea of having achieved. Hicks almost laughed out loud at that. Then in a paddock beyond a lawn he caught sight of the girl whom he had once seen in the Savoy restaurant during the War, to whom he had not been introduced. The years seemed to have treated her well, physically anyhow. In a white linen coat, in a summer setting of fields and trees and flowers, with the sea as a background, she looked an attractive woman. She was calling to ducks, who came waddling from a pond. They knew her, or feeding time. Pretty, rural, all that sort of thing. But Hicks wondered what she really thought of the life and of the failure that was her husband.

The man seemed an infernal time washing his hands. Hicks wanted to get down to making his money talk to a failure. Much more of the ambitionless simplicity of the place might induce him to give value to what was merely pretty-pretty. He turned back into the room that was kept tidy because it saved labour to be tidy. Looking round again he noticed something that he had missed before, a frame hanging beside the fireplace with four

medals mounted on velvet in it. The M.C. on the right of the line of four had a bar to it. He had not remembered about that bar. Twice the fellow must have done something that was not indeterminate. But the doing was over, the record of it formed a sort of family shrine on the drawing-room wall. Hicks wanted to find satisfaction in that proof that Cople's achievement was past; instead he found a disconcerting thought. Any fool, even the fool whose medals hung beside the fireplace, could have made money during the War had he chosen to make money his aim. Any fool, it had been too easy . . . Hicks pulled himself together as Cople came in.

'Good man! You've found me out at last,' Cople declared, holding out his hand. 'I really feel awfully guilty, Hicks. Being a damnable correspondent is no excuse for not having written to you. I owe you something for putting me in the way of all this.' He waved his hand in a sweep and laughed happily. 'But now you are here,' he continued, 'you are going to stop to tea. Bob is boiling the kettle and Ruth will get things ready in a moment. Afterwards I'll show you something.'

Cople looked very healthy, obviously his stomach gave him no trouble; the content which had been at the back of his eyes during the War was there again. Hicks postponed making his money talk; he began to wonder uncomfortably what Cople was going to show him after tea.

They had tea on the veranda. The boy with the nice manners produced a friend, another boy with nice manners, and the two of them waited on the adults and fetched hot water and cleared things away at the finish with the skill of much practice. They were neither of them prominent in the conversation, but took a perfectly natural part in it, achieving real companionship with their elders without touching precocity. Hicks found himself hoping that his son might grow up like either of the boys, wondering doubtfully whether companionship with his father would be possible. Half-way through the meal a man, who fairly shouted of the retired naval officer, turned up. He was obviously an intimate of the house and seemed a fellow who liked laughter. Hicks was suddenly aware of his own lack of intimate friends.

The conversation was carefully kept to lines which would not leave Hicks in the cold; but he managed to acquire information about the household. The Cople could not afford to keep a servant, although they hoped to be able to acquire a staff of one before the winter. It was a nuisance, Ruth Cople admitted, but it was a

matter of a servant or a car; naturally, although she hated housework, the car won. However, business was improving rapidly and hope was high. As the wife of a failure Ruth Cople appeared a success.

But she did not seem to consider herself wedded to a failure. That was perfectly obvious; and it puzzled Hicks. Nobody, neither the retired naval officer nor the boys nor his wife treated Cople otherwise than as a man on a rising tide of success, with solid achievement behind him. Casual allusions, stray remarks, a phrase here and there made that quite plain. It was clear beyond a doubt that in the eyes of the others Cople had earned the admiration due to a man who has succeeded. Extraordinary, when the fellow had reduced his wife to working like a servant girl. Yet not the only extraordinary discovery of the tea-party. Hicks found himself treated as a benefactor; not, as he had imagined that he would be by that simple circle, as a blatant profiteer. For some reason, wholly inexplicable, he was placed in the position of the patron who had opened the way to success.

The simple atmosphere of the whole gathering, the nice-mannered little boys, the friendliness, the woman who was a manual worker without neglecting her appearance or showing discontent, the cheerful acceptance of poverty, had at first affected Hicks. He listened to talk of fishing expeditions, which seemed the staple recreation of the family, with pleasure. For the moment he almost succumbed to a pretty domestic picture, very nearly imagined that Cople had not failed. But the absurd acceptance of the fellow as a success by the others brought him back into the world of reality again. The man who was doing so well that in six months' time he might be able to afford a servant was the same creature who had been afraid to push home a valuable tin enterprise, timid, without ambition, a failure born. Hicks got up from the tea-table, his stomach reasonably quiescent, with the weakness of admiring the pretty behind him. He had always dealt in realities shorn of shams; he proposed to deal in one very shortly. It amused him to picture the flutter in the absurdly false atmosphere of Cople's household when money proceeded to talk. Having fed, the retired naval officer was going; he held out his hand to Hicks.

'Glad to have met the man who brought Cople the chance of fame,' he laughed. 'I suppose you'll be taken to see Ruth. The experts say she is without fault. She has certainly had a good press.'

'She's very much over-booked,' Cople declared. 'I can't cope

with the demand for her. She'll pay for the serving wench and a bit more.'

'What she earns,' Mrs. Cople stated, 'being naturally all that Francis thinks about.'

She looked at her husband, who grinned back at her. Hicks did not like the look or the answering grin, something about them raised unpleasant doubts in him.

The retired naval officer departed; the nice-mannered boys cleared away the tea things; Mrs. Cople said that she would wash up so that they could go fishing; Cople led Sir Herbert Hicks round the garden. It was a beautiful little garden, beautifully set. The massing of many colours, the close-mown lawns, the trees, the little creek with its tumbled walls of mellowed granite, the wide sparkle of the sea, were very pleasing. The smell of many blossoms was heavy; the light was turning golden in the summer day's maturity. Hicks wanted it all for his own. As Cople pointed out plants and talked of them, Hicks arranged in his mind the sentences which should convince a failure that a successful man was going to have his way. Then Cople stopped at an archway cut in a yew hedge.

'But for you, Hicks,' he said, 'I might never have come to this. Of course all my life I've dreamed of it, meant to do it. And it stopped at dreams. Then you get me into Holman's, and the thing became a practical possibility. Now it is a fact.'

He led the way through the arch into a small rose garden, stopping at an oblong border, selecting very carefully a bud from one of the half-dozen bushes growing in it. Handling the bud with something approaching reverence, he looked at it critically before he held it out to Hicks.

'An established fact,' he murmured. 'Ruth Cople, a perfect deep red double rose with perfect scent. Long after I am dead people will find joy in what I have made for them.'

Hicks took the bud, but he kept his money silent. The look on Cople's face had convinced him that he did not want a place which would remind him of that look.

Driving back to his hotel through the golden evening, with wide views of land and sea about him, he had a horrid time with truth. Even his stomach failed him by remaining peaceful after receiving scones. Three-quarters of a million, that had been more when the War ended, had to confront a fool's face looking at a flower.

'Hell!' said Sir Herbert Hicks, and threw a rosebud out of his car.

FASHION IN FANCY STREET.

THE eternal feminine is eternally being rebuked for taking too much thought for raiment. Carpers fail to perceive that in this amiable weakness she is but following the example of the mere man. For it is the unlikeliest of able men who give amazing proof of their conviction of the importance of being earnest over what Bourget expressively if loosely defined as 'underfrills and wonderfrills.'

That poets should be allured by pretty silken properties is natural. There are indeed enough 'white robes' in poetry to keep every laundry in the Empire in clover. Ribbons abound to such an extent, that every Autolycus in Fancy Street might be stocked by the Elizabethans alone. It suffices for Herrick to observe even 'a careless shoe-string' to make it immortal in a song. Leconte de Lisle, in his lovely Keatsian fairyland, describes the elf queen's petticoat of woven moonbeams as '*ce qui vaut gloire et fortune.*' The greatest balladmongers adore finery, supplying us with the bravest attire, never wearing out and—blessed thought—bringing no bills.

'My love was clad in the black velvet
And I myself in cramoisie.'

Tennyson excusably decides that 'beauty should go beautifully,' and is meticulous over Guinevere's grass-green riding-habit 'buckled with golden clasps before.' Byron writes like a knowing lady's-maid when he dresses his Medoras. Both Rossettis are lavish of rich brocades and sumptuous embroideries. Hardy left sentimental verses about the 'little white glove' of the defeated candidate's wife. Space lacks for one tithe of the obvious instances of the fascination of the wardrobe for the poet.

As to the male novelists, the best of them are terribly at ease at the toilet-table. They go into detail with as much accuracy as audacity, from Richardson to Kipling, equally successful whether with falbalas and powdered curls, or shingles and georgette. Strangely enough the women writers who count are far more reticent. And it is not only the novelists. Lamb owns to a frank interest he made lucrative with delicious candour.

'A fashion for pink coloured hose for the ladies coming up at this juncture when we were on our probation for the place of chief jester on S's newspaper, we were pronounced "a capital hand." There was the collateral topic of ankles, what an occasion to a truly chaste writer like ourself of touching that nice brink without ever tumbling over it, of seemingly ever approximating to something not quite proper, whilst like a skilful posture master balancing between decorum and their opposites. . . . The ankles of our fair friends began in a few weeks to reassume their whiteness, and left us scarce a leg to stand on.'

Alas, when pink stockings came back, there was no Lamb to make them hole-proof. Most surprising of all, did not rough-friezed Carlyle fall deep in love with the intriguing philosophy of clothes? Well may his obscurities in *Sartor Resartus* have puzzled the exasperated readers of *Fraser's Magazine*. *Sartor* is a back number, it was ever a book for few to read, and fewer to damn even with faint praise. Yet if it gathers dust on the shelf, it establishes a curious fact.

To revert to the novelist, is to find him completely at home with the modiste, as were the smirking salesmen at whom Fanny Burney poked her fun in *Evelina*, when 'a shopping in Cheapside.'

'What most diverted me was that we were much more frequently served by men than by women. And such men! So affected, so finical! They seemed to understand every part of a woman's dress far better than we do ourselves and they recommended caps and ribands with an air of so much importance, I longed to know how long they had left off wearing them.'

Richardson's heroines rallied rapidly from their fainting fits and showers of 'pearly fugitives,' to discuss their hoops and patches far more lengthily than débutante *Evelina*. Sir Walter Scott did not disdain to take huge pains in this matter in every 'Waverley.' Of his Rebecca he relates in *Ivanhoe* that at the famous tournament at Ashby 'the fair Jewess was the cynosure of all eyes.' She wore a yellow silk turban with an 'agriffe' of plumes caught by a diamond buckle. Her purple 'simarre' was a miracle of embroidered flowers. Golden and pearl clasps fastened her 'vest' from throat to waist. With delicate discretion 'only the three top were unbuttoned to display a magnificent diamond necklace.' Well might scoffing Christian damsels be envious.

And long before Carlyle raged over the stupidity of Fraserians, a laughing philosopher who frequented balls in a saucy white satin

cap bedight with silver bugles and a perky feather of coquelicot, had said her say inimitably regarding this same clothes philosophy. *Place aux dames!* Jane Austen needs no stout volume in which to express herself. A salient paragraph suffices. Every Janeite can turn to it in the sparkling pages of *Northanger Abbey*, supreme among all biographies of flappers. Catherine, we learn, was almost kept awake by anxiety as to which 'head-dress and gown' would most surely rivet Henry's chains. 'Dress is at all times a frivolous distinction, and excessive solicitude about it often destroys its aim.' A sage great-aunt had lectured thus only last Christmas. Yet perverse Catherine actually longed for time to rush out and buy a new dress.

'This would have been an error of judgment . . . from which a brother rather than a great-aunt should have delivered her. Man only can be aware of the insensibility of man towards a new dress. It would be mortifying to the feelings of many ladies could they be made to understand how little the heart of man is affected by what is costly or new in their attire, how little it is biassed by the texture of their muslin, how unsusceptible of peculiar tenderness towards the spotted, the sprigged, the mull or the jackonet. Woman is fine for her own satisfaction alone. No man will admire her the more, no woman like her the better for it. Neatness and fashion are enough for the former and a something of shabbiness or impropriety will be most endearing to the latter.'

It is the conclusion of the whole matter. Meredith and Mr. Kipling would at once agree.

Jane let the men babble of millinery, and was reticent about it in her books. Not so in her delightful letters. Her bright brown eyes saw everything in her age of muslin. The advent of the flounce moved her to more epistolary eloquence than the possible arrival of Boney. Flounces came to conquer when she 'had flirted her last with Tom Lefroy,' and 'done everything profligate in the way of sitting down between the dances.' No wonder in far India he long remained a bachelor. There was only one Jane. If Anthony Trollope suggests a high-class draper's catalogue when he sets solemnly to work on the trousseau of a future marchioness, Jane makes us certain Mary Crawford and the Bertrams dressed perfectly by subtle implication. The Rev. Henry Tilney, an able connoisseur in muslins, reports that Catherine 'appeared to much advantage in a sprigged muslin robe with blue trimmings and plain black shoes.' A much duller divine, the Rev. Edmund Bertram,

approved Fanny's white with 'glossy spots.' Mrs. Elton, wearer of white and silver poplin, dismissed the wedding of Emma as 'a pitiful business, very few lace veils.' When 'the' regiment left Meryton that minx Lydia in her despair was actually indifferent to the ugliness of her new bonnet. There is little more.

Maria Edgeworth, however, follows the masculine lead, especially in those comets of their season *Tales of Fashionable Life*. Was it because their framework was suggested by Etienne Dumont, the hero unaware of her own secret romance? The 'Dashers' who were the Bright Young People of that date, drove their perilous 'Unicorns' recklessly in the Mall, unhampered by speed limit. Their extravagance would be incredible if we were not aware that Maria moved in Society with a capital, and was welcomed to that exclusive Paradise, Almacks. The Dashers were led by a lady, Mrs. Freke, who 'loved to show her fine legs,' and it was smart to be up to the neck in debt. Mrs. Freke made money by a wager, 'swearing she would hear Sheridan's speech and getting into the Strangers' Gallery disguised as a "spark."' Plain heiresses buy fifty gowns at fifty guineas apiece for their weddings with the lucky fortune-hunter before the Married Woman's Property Act spoilt his sport. In *Patronage* the ultra-smart Georgiana Falconer is reduced to selling off her wardrobe to her maid. 'Some young ladies are now not ashamed to be Old Clothes Women,' says Maria, remembering her moral. Adroit Lydia Sharpe cajoles her mistress into the conviction that she cannot play the lead in Rowe's dreary version of Voltaire's *Zaire* except with a *silk* velvet train. Mama Falconer suggests that a court dress might be 'given a Turkish Air' to be met with the rejoinder, 'you don't perceive how skimping these trains are now—a mere strip.' Despite Georgiana's hard-won silk velvet and 'soft sentimental blue satin with silver fringes looped with pearl,' she fails to hook the eligible German Count even when by a mean trick she has compelled her rival to appear in shoes a size too large.

Miss Edgeworth's contemporary, Susan Ferrier, the so-called Scottish Austen, wastes little time with the mantua-maker. Yet if her silly Lady Juliana rejected such 'delightful haps' as a 'dark-hued Joseph lined with red flannel'—a Joseph being an overcoat—Miss Ferrier herself was no fool on clothes philosophy. This may be conceded if to-day we do not re-echo Lord Carlisle in his *Elegy* to 'All-perfect Austen':

'If a sister e'er approached the throne
She called the dear "Inheritance" her own.'

For when mature Lady Elizabeth married her decadent Highland chief, she 'was dressed in the Clan Tartan, wore a Highland bonnet, made a speech, and looked well,' arousing curiosity as to her claim to be the first feminine public speaker in fiction. Lady MacLaughlan at least uttered weighty *obiter dicta* as she went about Bath in her oldest pelisse in the heyday of the season, and dressed up the silly old Aunt Grizzy because 'anybody that sat still, and did not speak, in a handsome cloak and fine Chantilly fall will be sure to command respect.' 'You're a simpleton,' comments her candid ladyship. 'But a simpleton in black satin and fine lace is one thing, a simpleton in printed cotton and coarse muslin is another. You must be well dressed if you would not be despised. Hold your tongue and let your clothes speak for you.' Jane herself would have smiled concurrence.

George Eliot, who had no idea how to dress, makes her heroines in their everlasting 'worked collars,' or even in 'cherry-coloured merino trimmed with swansdown,' absolute provincials. She scores isolated successes, such as Maggie Tulliver's in unrelieved old black brocade, and in the ball-frock of the farm-house belle Nancy Lammeter, 'silvery twilled silk with coral ear-drops and necklace, short enough in front to show a neat ankle.' 'Fine shades' she left to Meredith. She could never have comprehended why the frail ladies of Edouard Rod always wore blue shot silk when they were going to elope by moonlight.

Mrs. Gaskell, in delectable *Cranford*, gives a sound reason why its genteel spinsters were more than resigned to limited wardrobes. 'In Cranford everybody knew who they were, elsewhere none knew them at all. What could it matter if they clung to gigot sleeves?'

Charlotte Brontë—very dainty as to the fit of her own tiny shoes and gloves—reached Brussels to find her sartorial ideals with the French *couturière* uniting the 'perfectly becoming with the utterly unpretending.' And possibly seldom has there been more ado about nothing, than when Lady Eastlake bludgeoned 'Mr.' Curren Bell for letting Jane Eyre catch the elegant Blanch Ingram playing billiards of a morning with an 'azure scarf twisted in her raven hair.' As a red rag to a bull was this luckless chiffon to her ladyship, when she used vitriol for ink. She reviewed *Vanity Fair* at the same time, at the memorable moment when two undersized green-eyed governesses came, were seen, and conquered.

Lady Eastlake could not accuse Thackeray of social ignorance like poor Mr. Bell's. The clothes of Becky the immortal were the despair of her rivals in their inevitable rightness. She was always perfection, whether merely putting on a 'killing blue bow' to finish George Osborne, or rustling into pink silk for the Waterloo ball. We feel it fitted to a marvel over one of the triumphs of that *corsetière* she 'vowed she must send,' to the eclipsed Amelia. Blanche Amory chose well for a broiling Derby Day—a cool dove-coloured shot silk with 'ravishing little boots to match.' When perceiving she is too pale, she cleverly puts up her rose-lined parasol. Thackeray cruelly notes another boot—Lady Clavering's—large and of green satin 'in a stocking which was very fine whatever the ankle it contained might be.'

He shared the obsession of Dickens for a pretty ankle. Yet Dickens shows yet more intimate knowledge of the underlying philosophy of clothes. It might seem as if the garments of his vast human comedy were a minor matter. In reality they merit attention even if we are reminded too often of Arabella Allen's 'particularly nice boots with fur round the tops,' for Dickens fully realised dress as an indication of character. Who but 'Poor Miss Tox,' heroine of Austin Dobson's pleasant verses, could have worn what she wore?

'Miss Tox's dress, though perfectly genteel and good, had a certain character of angularity and scantiness. She was accustomed to odd, weedy little flowers in her bonnets and caps. Strange grasses were sometimes observed in her hair; it was observed by the curious of all her collars, frills, tuckers and waist-bands—indeed everything she had with two ends to it intended to unite—that the two ends were never on good terms, and wouldn't quite meet without a struggle. She had furry articles for winter wear as tippets, boas, and muffs which stood up on end in a rampant manner, and were not at all sleek. She was much given to the carrying about of small bags with snaps to them which went off like little pistols when they were shut up, and when full-dressed she wore round her neck the barrenest of locketts representing a fishy old eye.'

Only Lucretia Tox had such furs, though the perfidious Parisienne in Miss Edgeworth's *Leonora* also had one of these eyes—a brief fashion of eccentricity. In *Our Mutual Friend*, Lady Tippins, that ancient expert in social campaigning, thus sums up the Lammle wedding through her eyeglass.

'Bride five and forty if a day, thirty shillings a yard, veil fifteen pounds, handkerchief a present. Bridesmaids kept down for fear of outshining the bride, consequently, not girls, twelve and sixpence a yard, Veneerings' flowers. Snub-nosed one rather pretty but too conscious of her stockings. Bonnets three pound ten.'

Dickens admired *Sartor Resartus*, but Carlyle would not have known, as he did, how Mrs. Micawber felt equal to any festivity when she had put on her brown gloves.

To pass from such homely confections as Miss La Creevy's state cap to meet the Paris-clad Meredith ladies is a sharp contrast. Certainly Clara Middleton is as surely the best-dressed girl in fiction, as is the fair Countess de Saldar among married women. Clara's billowy crinolined gaze de Chambéry makes men weary of skimpiness sigh to hand her into dinner at Mrs. Mount Stewart Jenkinson's. Her frilly muslin with its graceful fichu is charming to its last bow, on a hot spring afternoon. Clara possessed the delicious secret of not only knowing what to wear but *when* to wear it. To the Countess dress was a science. Despite her cruel anxieties before the historic picnic, she could take thought how to make her black and white striped half mourning the perfection of 'airy sorrows, gauzy griefs.' We are told she was

'dressed ravishingly slightly in a foreign style, the bodice being peaked at the waist as was then the Portuguese persuasion. The neck was deliciously veiled in fine lace. Off her gentle shoulders as it were some fringe blown by the breeze this sweet lady opened her bosom to, curled a lovely black lace scarf.'

Meredith was as aware how old lace adds to beauty, as was John Oliver Hobbes when she averred that it 'made the old women sublime, and the young ones ethereal.' He proves his mastery of fine shades when Clotilde of the *Tragic Comedians* (who is *frileuse*) 'shivers into her sables.' 'There are Frenchmen who could paint it, only Frenchmen,' is his astute comment.

It is passing from Mayfair to Petticoat-Lane to glance at the much-bedizened dames of Disraelian romance. Disraeli's passion is for the sumptuous; good taste he knows not. His aristocrats play croquet 'in half-veiled and half-revealed under-vestment, red and gold or blue and silver.' In plain English he means the skirt looped up to show the under-skirt, as drawn by rare John Leech. What time his millionairesses went yachting, they wore

'maritime costumes which were absolutely bewitching, wondrous jackets with loops of pearl, (!) girdles defended by dirks with turquoise handles, tilted hats that screened their long eyelashes from the sun.'

Trollope is no Disraelian, and is perfectly aware how to stock his wardrobes suitably whether for the season in town or for country-house wear. The lame syren, Signora Madeline Vesey Neroni, shattered masculine peace of mind in pure white velvet 'with rich pearl embroidered lace,' gracefully reclining on a sofa draped with a crimson crape shawl. She learnt how to be effective from her mother, for Mrs. Stanhope lived to dress well. Trollope praised her consummate artistry. 'She knew the secret of decorating her constructions, and never stooped to construct a decoration.' It took 'three women' to array the future Marchioness of Hartleap, *née* Griselda Grantley, most astute of social climbers. 'But then look how perfect it is when it is done,' is the excuse of the designer of her 'robe' of lace relieved by the family diamonds. As for the historic trousseau she went about with awful solemnity, it has left us an exact record of what was the mode in the sixties. 'Twelve dozen pocket-handkerchiefs were not too many,' for the Venus Victrix of Lord Dumbello.

It is not in his poems alone that Hardy evinces the liveliest interest in clothes. Whether he read *Sartor* or not, he shows himself emphatically a disciple of Carlyle. His rural damsels have an eye for colour, and he employs one of his favourite adjectives, 'dashing,' to convey the result. Coquettish Fancy Day wore white and blue at the Tranters' dance, where 'she looked like a flower among vegetables.' She persisted in donning a saucy hat for church instead of the demure bonnet still exacted. She kept the wretched Dick waiting two mortal hours to go a-nutting whilst she leisurely altered the neck of another blue gown to be worn during his enforced absence. Blue is plainly Hardy's preference, for when fascinating Anne Garland goes to Weymouth to see King George she doubtless looked a dear, for 'she wore her celebrated light blue pelisse, a leg-horn hat tied with blue ribbons and a fine white muslin with excellent Honiton lace.' Hardy ignores the blue satin sandal sure to have peeped out.

To examine even a few of the imagined wardrobes of the massed battalions of the moderns would be superfluous, for we have as yet no guarantee as to their wearing qualities.

One exception is inevitable, because Mr. Kipling has assuredly

'reached the land of matters unforget,' whilst he is still with us. Until yesterday he stood beside Hardy. Now he stands alone challenging supremacy in this minor matter, as in greater things. French critics of authority have crowned his women Balzacian. The notes of their most fervent admiration are for *The Story of the Gadsbys*. How characteristic is the introduction of the small selfish minx destined to ruin the career of a good soldier quite as selfish. She is in her bedroom one hot May afternoon in Simla with her best friend speculating why the heels of a pair of

'long, lavender-coloured stockings get danced out first. Presently she says crossly, "I've run the string so, and I've run it so, and I can't get the fullness right on this hateful ball-bodice."'

Redhaired Minnie was ideally gowned in what Captain Gadsby described as 'a peach-coloured muslin thing.' It helped him to swerve in his allegiance to 'Poor dear Mamma,' in all the agonies of a twenty-four-inch waist. 'Ugh! how that habit catches her under the arm,' is the fickle Gadsby's observant reflection. Her very hands are 'in too tight gauntlets.' Nor is the black and white Paquin Meredith made for the Countess de Saldar more 'devastating' than the half-mourning ball-frock Mrs. Cusack Brenmil had 'rucked and tucked and gored,' with such success that she snatched back her husband from the clutches of Mrs. Hawksbee.

After all, it would seem that Carlyle hardly exaggerated the importance of that clothes philosophy for which with infinite labour he evolved a too-erudite text-book. How else can we account for his formidable array of disciples? The poet and the novelist know well that intimacy with all sorts and conditions of their men and women is ensured if they answer the feminine question, 'And what did they wear?'

ROWLAND GREY.

IN QUIRES AND PLACES WHERE THEY SING.

BY MARGARET ASHWORTH.

THE room is not very big, but its walls are high and must always have an unusual as well as a friendly air, being broken at odd places for hanging-closet doors and running into an unexpected corner near the window that looks out on the oaks. There has been a conspiracy against even measurements here. Doors and panes are only alike as trees in a formal avenue might be alike; the deep cutting of one window escapes joining the ceiling by two inches; that in the opposite wall, though not facing it, is dropped a foot; but it is the upper world only that either may reveal. As I lie I see through the north-westerly window the tops of unleaved trees, through the other the bare heavens. When one of the panes opens out like a tiny door on that sky I am reminded of Noah sending forth his dove on the face of the deep.

My walls, of silvery dun, seem to be the colour of the north-westerly sky at dawn on certain mornings. They bear an antique pattern—specks of formal rose in rhomboid groups and faint bars that shine or not as the light catches them. I doubt not they all shone when they were brave and new, almost as brightly as the freshening dawn-sky hanging in strips between the oaks. That cold, clear shining of the daybreak only lasts an hour and comes out with every sunrise, but my room is there all day, and in its bareness and formal austerity gives me coolness of mind, and peace. They have put me here to rest and think about nothing.

Perhaps it is the odd proportions of the room and the windows high in the walls that give it the aloof air I find most of all engaging. It is like a person whose eyes look beyond you and never oppress you by a direct stare, and still know all about you, and are kind. And perhaps it is because it reminds me of Alcuin's room that I know certain words are at home here: judgment, compassion, loving kindness. You could no more talk about complexes and repressions in this room than you could in that little cell divided from this by over a thousand years of time and a piece of land. Alcuin was the scholar monk who helped to build up the Cathedral library at York in the eighth century, and taught in the schools

there. Then Charlemagne found something for him to do abroad, and the Blessed Lord Abbot Alcuin, an old man, died in peace at Tours on a May day in 804. Before he died he wrote:

Here halt, I pray you, make a little stay,
O wayfarer, to read what I have writ. . . .
Dost thou make wide thy fields? in this small house
Peace holds me now. . . .
Alcuin was my name: learning I loved.
O thou that readest this, pray for my soul.¹

I woke to see in the dim room curtains shifting against an irregular patch of grey. Dawn, I thought, wearily. In the silence came three or four husky notes that had the odd effect of lying on that silence as an osier might lie on the sea. A few empty seconds and the blackbird began again.

'Oh yes,' said Nurse when at midday I asked her did she ever hear anything in the early morning—'blackbirds—I know. It is said the blackbird's shrill song wakes the rest of the birds.' There was quite a lot of things she knew about.

I said nothing more, but watched the medieval head that reminds me so much of the Hospice nuns at Beaune moving across my walls, and smiled to think of the secrets I shared with the blackbird. I could not have told you if my nurse was beautiful, but her coiffed head was a delight, and she would never have understood why. Those Hospice Sisters wore a more tedious and ample head-dress falling over their cream homespun gowns; and I think it was in that foundation I found a rule that delighted me: the Sisters must use a certain number of pins (it may have been a dozen or a score) to set their coif in place. To use fewer would be to endanger a human soul of the sin of pride.

It took a fourteenth-century painter to render that white head-dress of what we now call *organdie*. The Beaune Sisters' was homespun veiling of an incredible fineness like some, still called *voile*, I saw the other day from peasant looms in Czecho-Slovakia. Presently I forgot them all in idly watching my nurse. There could not be a more absorbing study of tones than that nun-like head as it passes across the silvery wall, stops with face bent, turns slightly and goes on. My eyes close while I am watching; I hear the door shut and I sigh with contentment to find still once more into what a refuge I may thus withdraw.

¹ *Medieval Latin Lyrics*: H. Waddell.

In my hearty days, whenever I might chance to close my eyes, I seemed only to think harder; a world of definite shape appeared behind the dropped lids. Now I am aware of nothing except a mellow gloom, gold tinted. I can shut in peace as I shut out sight. I wonder which I would rather have, ears or eyes; for if I had been still watching Sister's beautiful head I should not have been aware of a dusky silence charged with flickering airs that make it possible to listen to silence as one would to sound. I hear it often in the quiet midnight and like to think it is the room talking to herself; I can listen to it as a man in a lonely watch on the bridge can listen to his ship talking to herself, rustling and whispering in her heart.

There was one morning when a sorry tale came to my ears, phrase by phrase, from the wood that rises across the lawn, picketed in its outer stretches by my valiant oaks. A heavy gale had blown several beeches down, and in falling one had hit a thin leggy oak and left it sprawling, half up and half down, leaning on the boughs of a neighbour. The next storm would send it crashing into the roadway. I could ill spare the beeches; losing that oak was a grief.

The voices of the foresters came huskily in at my pane. I could count the men, hear spare branches lopped; I knew when ropes were being flung to avert disaster when the tree came down. Then came the sad criss-cross scrunch of the saw: my oak was in the hands of the executioner. The men paused to rest their arms. I heard one say: 'With this gone, those beeches will get the wind. They'll go next.' And I could not help wondering if the beeches could be conscious of their doom; and remembering another scene of doom: 'My friend, thou too must die: why then lamentest thou? Patroklos too is dead, who was better far than thou.'

The sawing began again. There was a warning cry, a crash, dead stillness; the hum or song of every tiny creature dropped in fright. In less than five minutes the birds had flown back and were perched in high branches, little caring what lay dead in the ruin beneath them.

That great tit has come to call again. Perhaps four times a day from the rick-yard there may arise that little double note twanged on a silver harp. I must always wonder if he is my great

tit who lives and sings in that overgrown sapling opposite the two beeches on the road. How often have I stood trying to see that saucy little body in the upper branches, and have known all the time that he was stuck in an absurd attitude, like a leaf to a twig, watching me and delicately jeering! I have never known him to sing on the other side of the road. He prefers the Shirburn Wood at his back, perhaps. Or he may be like some sailors I knew in Polperro who had never in their lives set foot on the other side of the harbour and 'didn't see no call to.'

A blue tit has joined the company, singing from a stump on the derelict lawn, if I mistake not. I do not know how many ears are listening to this processional music, but none can find it more of a blessing than I. On still days I can pick all the voices out, and often there is a stopping, as if to a baton's gesture, and then a beginning. There are days when the tempest drowns all voices but its own, wailing through a thousand crannies. Then, one hour, the wind drops, and all sound comes down to the area of this room or can enter singly at the open pane. There is the ruffle of my wood fire, the flame like a velvet ribbon shaken, and now and again like a handful of sparks brushed out of someone's hair. A light breeze sets up a soft sighing in Shirburn Wood. I know that foot slowly grinding the sandy road: it is the old hedger, who says he carries a heavier conscience in his right heel than in his left. There are very few cars. I can tell the sliding scrunch of a bicycle, and pick out the farm carts from the urgency of their wheels and the tread of the shire teams. A pony goes by at a sharp trot. Perhaps to-day the Medico will come along riding one hunter and leading another, setting up in my cell that most gallant commotion of two horses in step, and setting up in my heart a dull ache, for one of the things I must not think on is that another hand leads my horse from his stall, someone else mounts him and goes off. I know just what he looks like—head up, tail well out.

There was one day when the Medico slipped in on his way to the Meet, and being bullied on the point of stock-tying threw off his great-coat; and there rushed in upon the senses the leaping vividness of that Chinese vermilion against my silver-dun walls. I remember drawing a long breath and conceding at once the question of the stock, for the room was filled as if with a clangour of sound, a number of diatonic chords richly held. The writer of the book of Revelation could not know what he was missing when

he left the colour of a hunting coat out of the glories of the Apocalypse.

Every day the timber waggons go by, three or four horses to each—clip-clop shuffle, and the slow clank of chains on the empty keel. They are carrying from the Stonor Woods, five miles away. The timber teams take the morning for company—men and horses clean and fresh, the coats and tails of the bays something to be proud of—and come back when other woodmen are at their supper. I hear at night the heavy drag on the road and know that several trunks are chained down on the keel, making a lovely shape of burden and team as the leader takes the curve beyond the lawn, carrying 'the corse to the clay.' At night a lantern swings from a shaft, casting a mellow pool of light on the ground. At the rear is a winking red eye, and in this friendly gloom, which to town vision is black and terrifying, the horses go shuffling along the ground they know so well. How often have I hailed them in the dark and shouted good night, and watched the dim mass out of sight! They are a bit of very old England, and I listen for their passage every morning. It takes the two teams a long time to dawn on my ears' horizon, pass and fade out.

Noon is here. Down in the shed by the shippon the heifer is unhappy about something, and her bellowing fills the world with one single noise. Moses hears the stableman's foot and whinneys for his oats, and whinneys again when they come. I always can know the time from my horse's Please and Thank you. Then all is still. These big people are quiet. I can count my birds again and build up the tiny sounds, always with the fire-ruffle for muted strings gently plucked, to steady the choir: the robin, several finches, tits, sparrows, a thrush practising phrases down the lane, a wood-pigeon roo-hooing from the deep wood and as faintly heard as the throbbing flames in my grate. It seems odd that all these birds should keep their place, like a trained chorus. Then suddenly, down into it, across it, the blackbird flings his fluted song, joking, deriding, being shocked, laughing and making love by turns; and you know all the time that you were waiting for that entry. The blackbird does not stay very long, but he has set the air quivering and charged my cell with a new sense of life.

I try to read about Emma and her parent and the card table. The blackbird will not have it. He rushes in on a minute left blank with a song he had never sung before. He is whistling like a school-boy with his fingers at his lips and going headlong down

a slide at the same time. Most he reminds me of a baby god, a godling about four years old swinging on a bough or in a little reed boat, playing on 'a Pan-pipe stained vermilion.' Emma's card table is poor company in comparison. I think I should like Jane Austen better if her bright, malicious eyes had ever rested on something lovely like an unleaved ash, and seen the sweep of its bough ends, silvery and vibrant, instead of always that elegant or not elegant enough figure walking beneath. And if you want to be aware how unmusical is Jane's prose, how smug and complacent many of her sayings, read them when your hold on life has been shaken and there is a blackbird singing in your garden.

In shining forenoons there is a sign sent me from heaven to show how the year is growing. It is a silver ray of light, long and rounded at either end like a wingless airship, that comes through a loop in my screened south-easterly window and alights on the wall. On rare days when the sun is clear for a few hours this little light-ship may steal like the shadow on the dial and no pace perceived, travelling on a line that strikes the gleaming upright lines on my wall at an angle of about thirty degrees. Each time I may see it the silver beam has struck the wall at a lower spot; by so much shorter the distance between that argent sign and the floor is the sun higher in the sky. Were my days when I am to lie and think about nothing to cover another month, this measure of the spring would have lost its hold on the wall and been driven to sailing across my floor. While I am lazily pondering angles and progresses, and thinking that if I knew anything about the silver bodies that swim over the tops of the oaks by night I might turn my light-ship into an orrery, I find my eyes closing, and when I wake I have forgotten what was descending my wall. Coming again the next bright morrow, I greet it with a smile; sometimes it may not be a day for smiling. In such a tranquil passage do the fair hours flit by, with little sound but those that come outside when in Quires and Places where they sing here followeth the Anthem. In such a tranquil passage have the days and years of centuries marked their heights on my wall, with just such choristers to sing and say Amen. Alcuin might have been here waiting for that knocking at the door.

I had been lying muttering: Watchman, will the night soon pass? Dim light separated the curtains; presently came the first

faint trill, and before the blackbird in the rick-yard and the one in Shirburn Wood are answering each other in rich song I have time to think of that soft out-of-doors I know so well, the huge oaks sweeping the grey sky like a gently knocked besom. And in a bunch of twigs there is a tiny presence, so small and dark that you could not see it, but it has flooded the world with love and hope and immortality. The day is not yet come, but the blackbird is certain of its coming, and the sanity of its beauty, and of all things that are good. He struck my heart for a harp-string this morning. I had waited for that first song through sorry hours, and when I heard it there came to me from nowhere at all a sudden memory of that exquisite passage set amid the dreary tale of lusts in Hosea : ' Behold, I will allure her, and bring her into the wilderness. And I will give her the valley of Achor for a door of hope : and she shall sing there as in the days of her youth.'

Tears blinded the listener's eyes, and one groped again for one's roots, one's anchor. That little handful of a body up there watching the brightening world with curious eye was able to give a human being courage to go on.

'HOPE HOUSE.'

BY E. L. GRANT WATSON.

MR. VINES was pleased, singularly pleased, with his new purchase. Nothing that he could remember, no incident, since perhaps his earliest childhood, had given him a glow of satisfaction equal to that he now experienced as he looked round his room. This room had been his mother's. How well he remembered it, and, now after all these years, it was to be his own. Large enough to be both bedroom and study, it was yet not *too* large. It gave the feeling of a comfortable compactness, from which the hostile world was excluded. Behind the drawn curtains, he could feel *himself*. Mr. Vines heaved a sigh of contentment, yet as he sat at his writing-desk and looked at the shelves of books, so recently arranged, the expression of strain in his eyes did not relax, and his fingers played nervously with his pen.

Not only the room, but the whole of the small compact house pleased him. Even its outer aspect, squat and unpretentious, wedged between its larger neighbours, seemed exactly as it should be. It still bore the old name: Hope House. These London squares did not change much with the years. What extraordinary luck, he thought as he sat there on the first evening after the rush and bustle of the move, that he should have been able to buy back the old house at so very moderate a sum. Most certainly it should be his home for the rest of his life.

Mr. Hubert Vines was fifty, and looked every day of his age. He had never been so bold as to take to himself a wife, and perhaps for this reason had always been the prey of an inner dissatisfaction, which may well have been the cause of his constant change of habitation. It had always been his ambition to be the possessor of such a home as his mother had once made for him, and now, as he cast back in his mind, he remembered how he had first bought an old and attractive-seeming Queen Anne house at Twickenham. Its panelled rooms had appealed to his sense of the romantic, but alas, he had never been well there. The house had proved to be shockingly damp, and dry-rot was rampant in all the lower rooms. He had moved to a newly erected villa, but this had suffered, if

not from the evils of decay, from the disadvantages of extreme youth; its walls sweated moisture during the winter, and in the summer months cracked and peeled. He had sold it and moved to another, whose chimneys smoked. . . . And thus, letting his mind run from change to change, he admitted that though difficulties had always sprung up in his way, he had never with any persistence coped with them, but had moved on in response to the drive of discontent within himself. He had been seeking for something, and now at last, by mere chance, he had discovered, that what all the time he had been wanting was the old home of his childhood.—What other place than this little squat Hope House, with its white front, so safely wedged among the grander houses of the row?

For the last twenty years, through all his changes of residence, Mrs. Bridger, the always faithful Mrs. Bridger, had followed him . . . yet not without protests, for Mrs. Bridger had a temperament of her own, and above all things she hated change. Mr. Vines could not remember how many times she had given him notice, but she had never left him. Always at the last moment something had intervened. Eleven times he had raised her salary . . . once after every move, and Mr. Vines tried to persuade himself that it must be on account of the exceptionally high wages that she stayed, yet he did not forget that occasion when, as the wave of her indignation was ebbing, she had said scornfully: 'Why I should stay to have all this trouble put upon me, God alone knows. No money would ever make me do it. You are such a poor child of a body, that a woman hasn't the heart to leave you to fend for yourself alone in the world.' Perhaps there was some truth in her words. . . . But now those bitter times were over; he had found what he had all-unconsciously been seeking. Here he would live for the remainder of his life.

A knock on the door disturbed his meditations, and Mrs. Bridger presented herself.

'Will you have your supper up here or downstairs?' she asked tersely.

'If it is not too much trouble, I should like it here. Although we have a dining-room downstairs, I do not mean to make much use of it when I am alone. That will make less work. This is to be my room where I shall live most of the time. But now tell me, Mrs. Bridger,' he said amiably, 'what do you think of my old home, now that we have the furniture in it?'

'There is a dreadful mess down in the hall,' she said. 'Those movers' men have been none too careful, and their boots were just filthy.'

This remark, though negative in character, Mr. Vines took to express high approval. Encouraged, he continued: 'This room, as you may imagine, is very full of memories for me; and now that I have the old furniture, the desk and the table, which used to be my mother's, back in their old places, it looks quite like it used to look. Strange,' he mused, 'how rooms may hold their character for so many years, or rather, I should say, the character of the people who lived in them. Why, just fancy, I believe I was born in this very room, and though of course I don't remember about that, there are plenty of things I do remember. Won't you sit down, and let us have a little chat; there is no great hurry for supper; it can wait for a while.'

Mrs. Bridger, despite the fresh memories of the move, the rigours and arduours of which had fallen chiefly on her shoulders, was not displeased with the little house. In her opinion it was both genteel and convenient, and most particularly was she pleased with her own room, which, as she put it to herself, any lady might be proud to sleep in; and she appreciated these moments of confidence in which Mr. Vines, who as she knew was of good family, one that had seen prouder days, invited her to share with him his thoughts and feelings. She sat down on the opposite side of the hearth.

After speaking of the house for a while, Mr. Vines readily told of his past, and how his mother used to sit in this very room, while he played with his toys, and how in fine weather she would take her chair to the stone balcony outside the French window, while he, as a small boy trundled his little barrow in the tiny garden beneath, or played at trying to catch the goldfishes which then swam in the tank beside the tool-shed. From time to time, his mother would look up from her work and call out to him if she thought he was getting into mischief. Mr. Vines talked with obvious pleasure of the past, and as he talked his faded wrinkled cheeks became quite flushed. 'And now,' he concluded, 'I can almost imagine, if I shut my eyes, that the old time is back again, though I remember only too well that my dear mother has lain buried in her grave for many a long year.'

He paused and was silent for a while, and Mrs. Bridger thought: "Poor man, I believe those were the happiest years he has known."

Well, perhaps now that he's back in his old home he may not be so crotchety.' She glanced up at the clock. 'Deary me,' she said, 'how the time has slipped by. Are you not going to have any supper at all to-night?'

'Oh, bring it along,' said Mr. Vines testily, annoyed that the pleasant sequence of his thoughts should be broken, and then with a softening of his mood added: 'And bring up a bottle of port, and let us celebrate together the first night in the old home.'

The next morning, Mr. Vines was woken by a sharp and altogether unexpected sound, which, even to his half-awakened senses, conveyed a curious association. He sat up in bed and listened. The sound was repeated, and then, close upon that scream, so resonant of tree-tops and strange lands, there sounded the metallic, half-human call: 'Polly, Pretty Polly,' and then after a pause: 'Yes, darling,' in the same half-human tone.

A parrot! But how near and loud its voice, thought Mr. Vines. And how distressing! He lay back in bed and listened; and now another sound, no less disturbing, but of another nature fell on his ears. It was the repeated, insistent cry of a very young baby. There could be no mistaking it. Ehhhhhhh Ehhhhhh Ehhhhhhh, again and again.

But how could that possibly be? He had made particular enquiries about his near neighbours. There were no children in either of the adjacent houses. The White House on the right was owned by two old ladies, the Misses Jupp, with whom lived their grown-up niece, Miss Legge. The Red House on the left was occupied by Mr. and Mrs. Burnett, and he felt sure that the lady was far past the age of child-bearing.

Again that horrid tropical screech pierced the air. Silence followed which seemed tense with the threat of a repetition. Then again that cry of extreme helplessness, which, so endowed by nature with power to set on edge human nerves, no man or woman can suffer with indifference: the emphatic demand of a young baby for attention. Why did no one go to the child, to succour it, feed it or do whatever one did to babies? The infant must have been frightened, Mr. Vines thought, by that horrid bird, and no wonder. But why did they both sound so appallingly close?

There followed a silence longer than the previous one, during which Mr. Vines waited nervously. He did not wait in vain.

'Damnation!' he exclaimed, and he jumped out of bed, put on his dressing-gown, and went to the window. A brilliant spring morning was revealed, and sunshine came flooding into his room as he pulled back the curtains. He went out on to the balcony and looked around him.

His worst anticipations were confirmed. There, on the wall of the White House, not ten feet from his window, was hanging a large cage, and in it, upside down, clinging to the gilded wires was a red and green parrot. The bird had cocked its head on one side, and with a steady eye was regarding Mr. Vines. 'Yes, darling,' it said distinctly in its metallic tone. 'Yes, darling.'

Mr. Vines was speechless, yet his thoughts were very active. How could he possibly bear to live in close proximity to this creature? He would protest; he would not suffer it. But already the premonition came to him that the owners of parrots were likely to be obstinate and selfish, with little regard for the sensibilities of others. Vaguely the thought flitted through his mind: the mother of that baby, whoever she is, may be a useful ally in the struggle which is to come. But even as that thought brought a faint consolation, the parrot shifted its position, turned itself completely upside down, and (Mr. Vines could hardly credit his senses) gave vent to that identical cry of a very young baby demanding attention. Ehrrrrrrrr, Ehrrrrrrrr, Ehrrrrrrrr. It was the very sound, most perfectly reproduced. The bird had righted itself in the cage, and now had its eye fixed on Mr. Vines, with, so he thought, a mocking and malicious expression.

What could he do about it?

He would write and protest. Surely the laws of the land would not allow a man to be disturbed in this way. Most extraordinary, he thought, that a parrot should make a noise like a child. What foolish and perverted person could have taught it so undesirable a trick?

Early after breakfast he wrote a note addressed to the elder Miss Jupp. Himself he slipped it into the letter-box of the White House, and then, since he found the intermittent exclamations of the parrot too distressing to his nerves, he was forced to abandon his room and go to his office, and this despite his intention of taking the day as a holiday. He had looked forward to sitting on the balcony where he had sat with his mother long ago; and there with the old familiar room at his back, he had hoped to indulge in happy memories. Now that pleasant anticipation had come to

nothing, he went to the office as usual, but in rather an unusually bad temper.

The next morning, with windows shut and curtains drawn, Mr. Vines endured as well as he was able the exclamations of his tormentor; he muffled his head in his blankets, and yet could not escape. If it had not been, he told himself, for that life-like imitation of the crying child, he might have been able to have borne the other hideous sounds, but a baby's ear-exasperating, heart-touching Ehrrrrrr, Ehrrrrrr, Ehrrrrrr seemed to strike some sympathetic chord within himself, touching and rousing to tumult a secret weakness; that was the very utterance of dependency, complaining to the vast unknown. That petulant, self-centred bleat was terribly compelling. A creature that made that noise should be at once ministered to or smothered. . . . If it had been given to a child of his own to express such unflinching egotism, he might have borne it, as other fathers have done, but to have a disgusting parrot with his foreign, insolent behaviour simulating that human shamelessness was beyond everything. Mr. Vines ground his teeth in rage and buried his head under the bedclothes. . . . But to no avail, for during the periods of silence, which were often long and always irregular in length, he waited with an eager alertness. Better had the brute cried the whole time, and been as monotonous as the ticking of a clock.

At breakfast he found lying on his plate an answer to his note.

Miss Jupp's letter ran :

DEAR SIR,—

I am indeed sorry that you should have been inconvenienced by the early morning notes of my parrot, but I feel sure that if you consider for a moment you will realise that the poor bird has as good a right as any other living thing to sunlight and the fresh air of springtime. I cannot believe that anyone would selfishly deny to the least of God's creatures the right to live and be happy. I am only sorry that the joyous calls of my parrot do not bring you the same happiness as they do to myself and my sister, who have known and loved him for many years.

I am, dear Sir, yours truly,
ELEANOR JUPP.

That's all very well, my dear woman, thought Mr. Vines, but . . . but . . . and his thought halted. That letter was hardly

written in a spirit of conciliation. He found it an obstinate letter, to say the least, and he guessed that something very like it had been written on other occasions, for no one who was the owner of that baby-mimicking horror could have escaped without protests. She was an old hand at the game, hardened in battle. The woman was obdurate and unfeeling; being selfish herself, she threw the onus of selfishness on another. Mr. Vines felt thoroughly upset; he foresaw what might develop into a long struggle, if indeed he had the will and courage to be engaged in one. He doubted. What was to be his next move? He vaguely considered the possibility of an appeal to the police, for surely the creature might be considered a public nuisance. But then he had always shrunk from publicity or from any harsh contact with the outer world. Could he perhaps buy the bird? He would pay a large sum to be rid of it. No, that would be no possible solution. The women would never sell it; doubtless they cared for it with perverted passion, as for some child.

He confided to Mrs. Bridger his horror of the parrot, and was surprised to find that though she had heard the cries, she had not been disturbed by them. Then it was possible that not everyone was affected as he was affected by those sounds. From Mrs. Bridger he learned that the Misses Jupp had lived in the White House for the last two years. They had moved thither from Surbiton, and had brought their parrot with them. Old Mrs. Fothergill had lived in the house previously. She had been an elder sister of the Misses Jupp, and on her death they had inherited the property. Mrs. Fothergill, so Mrs. Bridger had heard from the milkman, had lived in the White House for very many years. Both she and her sisters were well thought of in the neighbourhood; they were people who spent money freely on charity and good works.

This information brought little consolation to Mr. Vines, but the name Fothergill stirred distant memories. His mother had been well acquainted with Mrs. Fothergill, and he remembered that as a small boy he had seen her.

Having made the protest, occasioned by the first shock of outrage, and having received a rebuff, Mr. Vines, like many another timid and self-diffident nature, waited for a while in indecision. The days passed, but not his irritation. He tried to adapt himself to the inevitable, and to persuade himself that he did not mind those sickeningly reiterated calls. But he did mind them. In fact, he minded them more and more; and, to make matters

worse, as the days lengthened and the weather grew warmer, the parrot was more frequently and for longer periods placed outside the window. And at last the time came when he felt something had to be done. He could endure it no longer. He would make a personal call, and would appeal to the better feeling of the old ladies.

The Misses Jupp received him in the large drawing-room, which looked out over the gardens at the back. As he entered, he felt that only his desperate resolution could have ever made him face the alien and probably hostile powers that he was now to encounter. The grandeur of the furniture, the mirrors, the wealth of mahogany and satin-wood, these alone had an intimidating effect; the very carpet, so red and so soft to his tread, seemed to steal from under his feet the ground of his support. As though in a single flash, as he entered, the whole contents of the room struck at his senses as something foreign, daunting his resolution and making him shrink into himself. And then, in the same flash of perception he saw the parrot, swinging in his cage, at the far end of the room. Ah, how in the near presence of his enemy would he meet its guardians and doubtless loving protectors? And then he was aware of the two women, and his courage, already faltering, seemed at the realisation of their personalities to be pushed far back down the passage to the outer door through which he had entered in so foolhardy a manner.

Miss May Jupp, the younger sister, was of enormous stoutness. Her face was red and shining, and her cheeks were the largest cheeks that Mr. Vines had ever seen. She sat with stiff back, resolutely in her chair, and the glance of her dark eyes was both self-satisfied and intelligent. Mr. Vines instinctively turned from her to her elder sister. Miss Eleanor Jupp might well have been described as a magnificent woman, and had a striking resemblance to the ladies of the royal family, of which she was not unaware. Her manner was gracious and ample, and was reinforced by the conscious dignity of her outward appearance.

She received Mr. Vines with admirable deportment, bade him be seated, and in rather a high-pitched voice, which could never be mistaken for that of any other but an English gentlewoman, talked of the weather and of the fête, which on the following Wednesday was to be held in aid of the local temperance society.

Mr. Vines listened with ill-concealed nervousness, and as he listened, he realised that he was becoming incapable of making

any rude protest against the parrot of so superior a being. But yet, but yet was she not a woman, almost a gracious woman? Would she not understand his trouble? Could he not, like the Temperance Society, fling himself upon her charity? As her mellifluous voice paused at the end of a period, he took his courage in both hands and plunged.

'I have called,' he began, 'because my life has been made very trying for me, very trying for me indeed, as I think my letter conveyed to you, by the calls of your parrot. I have done my best, I assure you,' he added nervously, 'to make myself indifferent. . . . But indeed, I assure you I cannot. . . . My home, which is so charming in other respects, is spoiled for me. . . .' He caught the grave downward glance of the elder Miss Jupp, and interpreting it as a look of sympathy, continued: 'I feel sure you would not, you would not wish me to be driven from my house so recently acquired . . . my old home in fact, where my mother lived for so long, in fact the home of my childhood. . . . I wish it were not so,' he said, feeling that he had stripped himself naked before these strangers, 'but, but . . .' He paused, at a loss.

'And what is it that distresses you?' asked Miss Jupp in her most conciliatory yet superior tone.

'Any sharp noise,' Mr. Vines declared, 'is distressing to me. . . . But then I think, I think I could overcome my aversion. . . . But . . .' Looking up at her aloof benevolence he thought, would she not understand? 'But,' he continued, 'you will, I hope, forgive my saying so, but about your parrot there is something peculiar. . . .' He paused again, and the parrot, as though aware that the conversation had turned upon himself, rattled the bars of his cage and gave the thrice-repeated cry of a very young infant.

'It is that, *that*,' cried Mr. Vines, suddenly fired with courage, 'that I cannot abide.'

'Be quiet, Polly,' admonished Miss Jupp. She shook her finger at the bird, and turned to Mr. Vines with an indulgent smile. 'Yes, it is very peculiar for a parrot to make such a cry,' she said, and Mr. Vines noticed that the sisters exchanged a fleeting though significant glance. 'He is the only parrot that has ever been known to make such a very distinctive note,' Miss Jupp concluded.

'It is the cry of a very young child,' said Mr. Vines. 'I find it most distressing,' and gaining courage with his rising indignation, he continued: 'What foolish person could have taken it into his head to teach the bird such a sound?'

'We have been very puzzled about that,' said the elder Miss Jupp, and again Mr. Vines saw that the sisters exchanged a glance, and he thought that he discerned a faint smile on their lips. The fat one was distressing to look at; she was so fat that he thought she must be uncomfortable, yet despite her frog-like posture and the upward tilt of her thick neck, there was the expression in her dark eyes of an amused disdain. 'It is certainly a curious sound,' the elder sister continued, 'but you know parrots are very imitative, and Polly is very old, and he has a memory as good as any human being. He is quite a wonderful bird.' She raised her hand as Mr. Vines was about to speak, and her gesture seemed to have the assurance and gracious power of a royal personage. 'I understand, I understand,' she said, 'but if you let me tell you his story, I think you will find that it is not without interest for you.'

What she understood Mr. Vines could not imagine unless it was his very real indignation. But *that* she did not understand. How could any woman who lived in the close presence of that horror be aware of the sensitive shrinking of his soul? Would that he had the power to express his aversion! He had not the least desire to hear the brute's story, but quelled by her gesture, and a little hypnotised, as he always was by strange surroundings, he waited, clenching his hands, and could utter no protest.

'When we lived at Surbiton, as we did for many years before we came to this house, Polly never made the crying noise which you allude to. He talked like other parrots, but he never gave that peculiar little cry, which as you remark is that of a very young infant. Only when we came to this house did he make this particular noise.'

Miss Jupp paused, and Mr. Vines, watching her majestic person and wondering to what end this rigmarole would lead, discerned in her small blue eye a look of meditative sympathy. 'I am getting on in age,' she continued, 'and poor Polly is, I believe, older than myself. As I told you he is a very old bird; but then parrots can live to a great age, more than a hundred years. He was given to me more than half a century ago. I was a girl then, and I remember that I was staying with my elder sister in this very house, just at the time that Polly was given to me. For a month or six weeks we must have stayed here together; it was during the long summer holidays. Polly had come only quite recently from his native Brazil, and was hung in his cage, not the same fine cage which he has now, but a smaller wooden one, out-

side the window. It was then that he learnt the cry to which you have alluded. On the balcony of the house next door, there was at that time, more than fifty years ago as I have said, the cot of a newly born infant, that was placed there to take the sun and the air on fine days. The child was a peevish child, and was constantly crying, and Polly, being so close by, in his cage, and being so clever at imitation, learnt to cry in just the same voice as the baby. I remember well how amused we were, but we were also a little distressed that he should have learnt so ugly a noise,' and here she looked at Mr. Vines.

'Very peculiar, wasn't it?' said the younger Miss Jupp in a sharp, derisive tone.

'Yes, most remarkable,' said the elder sister in her soft and more sympathetic voice, 'for when we went back to Surbiton, he seemed quite to forget it, and only when we returned here after so many years did he remember. An association of ideas doubtless, and one that reached back more than fifty years.' She paused for a moment, and then said softly: 'A curious coincidence too, that the name of the people in the next-door house should have been the same as your own.'

'Hardly a coincidence,' said the harsh voice of Miss May Jupp, and though Mr. Vines did not look at her, he was quite sickeningly aware of her fatness. 'Hardly a coincidence at all, for Mr. Vines has just told us that like ourselves he has returned to his old home after so many years. If he complains of poor Polly, he should put two and two together and consider who it was who taught him his bad habits. Very curious certainly,' and her laugh seemed the coarsest laugh that Mr. Vines had ever heard.

'Impossible,' Mr. Vines muttered under his breath.

The elder Miss Jupp continued as though she had not heard the rude jibe of her sister, but her high-pitched and lady-like tones seemed to close the last hope of escape for the unhappy man. 'The Mrs. Vines who then lived in Hope House was a friend of my sister's. She was the mother of only one child, a son; and soon after the time that I am speaking of her husband died. She lived on in the house with her little boy and I have heard that often and often . . .'

But though she continued to talk, Mr. Vines heard no more. With a frown on his sallow face he was gazing at the carpet; his cheeks were tingling with shame; he dared not raise his eyes. How could he escape from this suffocating house and these torment-

ing women? What could he find to say to cover his flight? One sentence alone, that of Shylock in his defeat, kept running in his head: 'I beg thee give me leave to go from hence. I am not well.' But he would have to find less appropriate words.

What he said, and how he managed to get out of the house, he could not remember an hour afterwards. Kindly forgetfulness hides our deeper shames. But in his own room he must face the irony of circumstance which had preserved his own baby-complaints to assault his middle age, and make restless his morning peace. Was it indeed truly possible that the parrot was reproducing the cries of his own childhood? Was it with those notes that he had summoned his mother's aid, and voiced his pitiful complaint against the world? These were bitter questions. Mr. Vines had almost forgotten that he had ever been anything so distant from his present condition as a baby. Now he must realise that he had not only been a baby but a peevish baby with an ear-piercing cry; and, as on the following morning he was compelled to listen again to those sounds, they fell upon his sense with a flicker of old-time familiarity as though they had indeed never been forgotten. There was no need to seek for further proof. Those were his own native notes. With such insistence he had called his mother, and, as he cast his glance inward, he was aware that the echo of that childish cry had never ceased. He had been always afraid, complainingly afraid, and such was the very utterance of his soul.

And now, what was he to do? How could he remain in the neighbourhood a day longer? Those two old women, who had played with him so cruelly, and told him with such malicious pleasure of his shame, they would not keep silent. Oh, no, it would make too good a joke. He could imagine how they were whispering over it and chuckling and telling their friends how he, the sensitive shrinking soul, had come knocking at their door to complain of the cries with which he, more than fifty years ago, had infected the memory of their only too-truthfully recording parrot. How could he hope to take successful action against them? With greater justice, they might take action against him. No; he would not be able to brazen out such a situation; he would have to leave the neighbourhood, for apart from the pain of his shame there still remained the bird, who every fine morning would remind him of that hateful yet cherished echo.

But what was he to do? The question repeated itself. If he were to abandon this house, which he had been so pleased to

call his own, Mrs. Bridger would without doubt leave him. He had taxed her endurance already to the uttermost. Another move, so close upon the last, and no rise in wages would hold her faithful! She would never understand his weakness; and then she was so pleased with her room and with the little house, just as he had been pleased with it, that she would not forgive him if faced with the prospect of another upheaval. He could imagine how she would upbraid him.

A few days passed, and Mr. Vines balanced in his soul the choice of evils, and as morning after morning he listened to those mockeries out of the past, his doubts resolved themselves. That echo of his babyhood was not to be endured *on any terms*. Rather than meet that parrot-cry, which from his first beginnings had been held crystalline and unchanged, poignant in impotent demand, he would leave the home of his youth, where fondly he had imagined he might spend his declining years; and, if he could not make a home here, he would assuredly not try to make one elsewhere. He would meet the indignation of Mrs. Bridger, and accept the penalty. Let his illusions crumble into dust; he would go far from the once-treasured memories of his youth, and, if his fate so demanded, live alone and among strangers, in rooms if need be, or at the worst in an hotel. He could choose even that as a preferable alternative to the near presence of that hated bird.

A few days later the pantehnicons were at the door of 'Hope House,' and Mrs. Bridger, whose wrath had already burnt itself out, was watching with the sadness of regret the last of the carpets being rolled up. Mr. Vines had already left the home of his youth never to return.

*MEMOIRS OF WILLIAM DALGLEISH,
BUTLER TO SIR WALTER SCOTT.*

(DISCOVERED AND EDITED BY G. E. MITTON.)

PART II.

XI.

'ONCE upon a time Sir Walter Scott visited Blair Adam estate of the Lord Chief Commissioner in Kinrosshire. Was there three nights. I happened to meet his Lordship and Sir Walter walking.

"Well, Dalgleish," says my Lord, "have you been viewing my grounds?"

"Yes, my Lord."

"And what do you think of what you have been over?"

"Fine woods and parks, my Lord."

"Have you been round the rides yet?"

"No, my Lord. I do not know where to find them."

"Well, follow us and I will put you on the scent."

'I followed, but I thought they never was cuming to the scent, for they crossed fields and plantations, and every now and then stood still and consulted with one another. However his Lordship says at last, "Do you observe that gateway?"

"Yes, my Lord."

"Enter it and you will come on the rides, and let me know what you think of them."

'They sertenly are pretty, but I was not round the half of them; I found the garden still prettier, so I examined it and found something of better relish, I leave the reader to guess what. Next day I went to a small village about two miles off, was told it was worth while seeing. Quite disappointed. Came home, saw Sir Walter.

"We start to-morrow at six morning so that we will reach home by breakfast time."

'Up all redy. Crossed at Queensferry in an open boat; when we was about the middle of the ferry the sea gote rough and a wave struck me on the back and drenched me most completely.

Sir Walter laffed most hertely, said he had heard of old wives dooking their clooking hens to stop the clooking of them, and "that will stop the clooking of you, my man."

'Sir Walter was sitting almost opiset me, and in a few minits there was a most tremendous wave struck him on the breast, made him all sigh again. When he had time, "Well, I am very cheep for this. For I was laffing at your calamety, but the clooking is off us both now at any rate. I wish we was on land."

"We will not be longe now, Sir Walter. I see the carrage waiting."

'So as soone as we was upon land, "Give me your shoulder, Dalgleish."

'When we came to the Inn I seated Sir Walter in the carrage. "Now you had better go and take sumething to keep the cold from hurting you." I called for a gill of brandy and offered Sir Walter the first of it. "I dare not for my stomach's sake. Give it to Peter." So I took the rest. I was in the act of mounting beside Peter, when Sir Walter called out: "Where the divell are you goine? Cume in here."

"I will keep you verrey uncomfortable being so wet."

"Isn't the clooking off us both? Now, Peter, the whip and horses is mine, so get on."

'Peter was not long before he landed us at home. "Now, Dalgleish, go stairs and shift yourself emediatly and I will provide for myself." So he went into the dining-room to ask after the ladies' good healths, and I took the opertunety to lay out sume clothing for him. In he cumes. "What the divell are you doine here? Did you not hear what I said to you?"

"Yes, Sir Walter."

"Well, you will almost niver go wrong if you attend to my orders."

'By the time I gote myself shifted, the hackney coach came up to the door to take him to court.

"Well, Dalgleish, I am on tramp again to gain the bread for you and me." Came from court at twelve o'clock. Has not much to do to-day, is thankful of it. "I will get some of my memor-andums markit down to-day—the safest plan is if any body calls say I am not at home." So he had a quiet day to himself for once, which was seldom the case with him.

"I have been very diligent and done a good day's work," this was passed betwixt us at bed time.'

Sir Walter mentions this rough crossing in a letter from Edinburgh to Lord Montagu, quoted by Lockhart and dated 15 June, 1824. He says :—

‘I parted with them at Blair Adam on this day—for, taking a fit of what waiting-maids call *the clevers*, I started at six this morning and got here to breakfast. As it blew hard all night there was a great swell on the ferry, so that I came through

“Like Chieftain to the Highlands bound, crying, boatman—do not tarry,”

or rather

“Like Clerk unto the Session bound.”

‘I could have borne a worse toss, even a little danger, since the wind brought rain, which is so much wanted.’

XII.

‘While I was in Sir Walter Scott’s house, he and Lady Scott and family was going to St. Boswell’s Fair, and as there was no company at Abbotsford, Sir Walter wished as many of the servants to go as possible in the way of giving them a treat. All redy ; off we set ; all in good helth and spirits ; so we landed at St. Boswell’s Green, but as it was only in the forenoon there was not much stirr goine on, so I took a dander through the Fair by myself, and here I meets Sir Walter, Lady Scott and family.

“Have you got your fairing yet ? ”

“Not yet, Sir Walter.”

“Oh,” says Lady Scott, “Sir Walter, give him his fairing.”

‘Sir Walter, taking me off at a side, says, “Now there is a pound, and give all the servants their fairings, and sumething to drink. Do not be scrimpet with them, for you know there is nothing to do at Abbotsford, and that we dine at Mr. Lockhart’s at Chiefswood in the way of goine home.”

‘So I took the hint. Thinks I to myself, if they will taste of the cratur they shall not be spared. I thought it was as little as I could do to give Sir Walter and family their fairings, so I bought sune gingerbread nuts, and distributed them amongst them, which they humbly thanket me for. So I returned to the Inn where we had sumething to keep up our spirits, then we had a dander through the fair for two hours. Meets Sir Walter and family, happy to see us, and hoped we would enjoy ourselves.

“Now,” says Sir Walter, “there is one thing I have to request of you, that is that you do not enter into any of these tents, for

their drink is poison. Go to the Inn and you will find it good." So off to the Inn we went, and made ourselves happy ; off to the fair again, and as this was to be our last trip through it, we thought that we would enter one of the tents, even suppose we should drink none. In we went ; had a wee drope, verrey good ; had a drop more ; then went to the Inn to see Sir Walter and family off. As soon as Sir Walter's back was turned one of my family says, " Now we shall enjoy ourselves, for we had not freedom before for fear of meeting them." " Well, well," says I, " let us get on, for we all know that we have full liberty from Sir Walter. Now is our time, for there is no stopping upon the road." Gote them all very dacent ; gote off from Boswell's Green all singing and laffing ; was to have gone straight to Abbotsford, but here is a messenger, informing us that we was to land at Chiefswood by Mr. Lockhart's orders. So we obeyed, and here we got another fairing from Mr. Lockhart, which made us all fair enough.

' As soon as Sir Walter set off (for home), we followed the best way we could, so when we came near to the house, I took a near hand road and was at the house before the cart. I informed Sir Walter if he wished to see the landing or disembarkment of the troops now was his time. Sir Walter entered the dining-room, where he had a full view. We gote three out pretty snug, but the other three would not cume out, they said they were quite comfortable and as the door of the cart was off, I slippit to the fore end of the cart, and turned it all up together. So here were the poor divells sprawling like as many pigs, and Sir Walter fit to burst with laffing. I gote them into the house, and seated there we had sume good laffing, so we had a wee drop of the cratur to make up friendship before we stammered to our beds.

' I offered Sir Walter his change nixt morning. " No, no, you keep that. You did great justice to the Fair and you may depend on it there is sume of them that will remember being at St. Boswell's Fair with Sir Walter as long as they live."

' Mr. Lockhart is married upon Sir Walter's oldest daughter, Chiefswood the place of residence.

' In the korse of a few days there was a dinner party at Abbotsford, and in the korse of conversation it was mentioned that Sir Walter had been at St. Boswell's Fair. " Yes," says Sir Walter, " and I enjoyed it verrey much, for it was a fine day, but the divell a one had the discretion to ask if we had a mouth, unless my own butler, who filled our pockets with gingerbread nuts."

XIII.

'In the month of May Sir Walter was goine to Blair Adam, the seat of the Lord Chief Commissioner, but the day which he intended to go was so stormy with wind and rain, he put it off till nixt day, which proved more favourable. So we set off at eleven o'clock, gote on very well until we came to the avenue, which leads up to the house. Here the post boy made a stand still, Sir Walter calling out, "What is the matter?"

"Here is a large tree lying across the road. I cannot get on."

"The divell there is! Well, Dalgleish, you and the post boy must put it off at a side, we cannot stop here all day."

'The post boy and I did our endeavour, but it baffled us both, so Sir Walter cumes from the carrage and to work we sets, and puts it off at a side to let the carrage pass, and a good lift Sir Walter did take. I seated him in the carrage, and as the avenue was rather steep I walked up to the house, and being at the house before the carrage, his Lordship threw up the window and ast what I had done with Sir Walter.

"He will be here presently, my Lord. Here they cume."

'Downstairs his Lordship cumes; a happy meeting. After they had done with paying their respects to each other, "Well," says Sir Walter, "what do you allow me and Dalgleish for acting as wood foresters to you?"

"Wood foresters? I do not comprehend your meaning."

"Yesterday being a verrey stormy day it has blown down one of your trees across the avenue, so we was obliged to cume out of the carrage and put it off at a side, or we would not have been here to-day."

"God's mercy! Thomas, send for James the forester, and let him know that I wish to speak with him emediatly."

'Here cumes the forester. "Well, James, what dammage done with yesterday's tempest?"

"Indeed, my Lord, there is a good many trees blown down."

"Sume of the finest ones too; I understand there is a fine one blown down in the avenue which Sir Walter and his butler was obliged to leave the carrage to put it off at a side to let them pass. Now, James, see that there is no more lying across the roads or walks to innterrupt the passing of carrages or carts, and I will be round in a little and see if it is all right, and if I find anything wrong I pity you with the tongue plaig."

'So off sets his Lordship and Sir Walter. All is right so far as they had gone. It was not long before they came home drenched to the skin.

"Well, Dalgleish, we have catched the rabbit."

"Not a drope here, Sir Walter, as fine as when you went away."

XIV.

'There was one morning I happened to call Sir Walter at five o'clock instead of six, and not finding out my mistake untill I took up his shaving watter, when I happened to give a glance at the time piece, I hesitated whether to let him know of it or let him find it out. I went and told him.

"Well, Dalgleish, I do not scold you for that, but if it had been an hour too late I sertenly would have been very angry, for I have a parcel goine in with the Blucher coach this morning, and if I had been an hour later instead of earlier it would have been a great disapointment to Ballantyne and his men. Always study to be before your time rather than after it, and you will find that you will disappoint nobody and they will count you a puntionl, ancious, onest fellow."

'I came running downstairs for the housemaid to put on Sir Walter's fire for that he would be down emediatly. She being in no hurry about it I entered Sir Walter's study in rather a sharp manner, not expecting that he was cume down. When I entered so quick it made Sir Walter start, and in one moment he made the quill which he was writing with spinn at me. I lifted it up and gave it to him. He got up with a laff saying, "Well, what a pity, but if it had ben my nibby stick (hooked stick) in the place of the quill, it would have made you remember to cume into my room more cauciously, but in the meantime you had better let the housemaid know, and have a fire put on, for it is verrey cold. I am sitting here with my teeth chattering in my head."

"That was what I came into your room for, to see after the fire."

"Then I was goine to break your head for looking after my comfort, that would not have been a gentlemanly trick. Well, well, I know you forgive me, for you told me that you did not care what I said to you."

'The poor housemaid had taken fright, and would not enter the room for fear of getting a scold. I went down to the kitchen,

took up the gathering coal. I soon gave him a good fire to put the chattering off.

"Dalgleish, it is too bad to make you house-keeper, butler and housemaid. What will you turn yourself into next?"

"I think scullery maid, Sir Walter."

"I don't care for your taunts, so you may as well keep them as let them out."

XV.

'After the failure of Sir Walter he informed me to let the servants know that their allowance of ale was to be taken off, and if there was any of them that did not agree to his preposals, they could find themselves situations at first term. I assembled them together and informed them. They were all quite agreeable.

'In about two months after this Sir Walter ast me how I was cuming on with my droothie servants. "No complaints amongst them."

"Well, slip down to the brewers and order a cask of ale, and do give them a tasting, we must not let them gisen (shrivel, dry up) altogether. Do not let them know of it untill you just take it in to them."

'So in two days here cumes the ale, they not knowing, but it was small beer.

'I assembled them into the laundry. I went and brought a small joog of ale with a feather into it, so I held it out to the cook first. She stared as if I was goine to poison her, and all the rest laffing at hir; at last I told hir that she must draw the feather across hir mouth to hinder hir mouth from gisening, which she did. So I tooke it round and they followed the example, at the same time laffing herty, and Lady Scott came downstairs to give sune orders about dinner, and as she wished to know the reason of our being so herty, I tooke up the jug and feather, and explained it to hir. She was no better than hir servants, for she laffed as loude as any of them. No sooner had she left us than she told Sir Walter the best way she could. But Sir Walter, not understanding, pulled his bell. "Cume, Dalgleish, I have got a long story from Lady Scott, but upon my sowel I do not understand hir, for she cannot tell me without laffing."

'So I told Sir Walter and explained it to him, and he laffed as herty as any of us all.

"But, Dalgleish, I wish you to give them a drop wise-like."

"So I will Sir Walter, if they will take it. I was only trying if they were not so much gised but that they would hold in, so I think they are all pretty right."

'Now I cumes amongst them, having told them to keep themselves all together untill I returned.

"Ho," says the cook, "is Sir Walter angry with us?"

"No, no, Sir Walter wishes us to be happy."

'I went into the cellar and gote a bottle of whisky and put it into a flaggon of ale, warmed it and plenty of shugar. If the laffing was high before, it came to be higher still. Sir Walter, hearing the noise, pulled his bell. I went up.

"I daresay, Dalgleish, your feather has a charm, for it keeps you all merry."

"No, no, Sir Walter, we have thrown away the feather, we have taken to the hornes now."

"Is it good ale?"

"Verrey good. I have no doubt but you would take a tumbler of it sooner than you do your porter."

"Let me have a glass of it at supper time."

'I did not forget. Sir Walter says, "Well, Dalgleish, it is most excellent." So much for the tasting of Sir Walter's present. We had our allowance of ale after that, same as usual.'

XVI.

'At the time that Capten Scott was in the fifteenth Hussars he wrote to me from London that his charger was dead, and that he would take it kind if I would mention the circumstance to his father. I had no objections to do so, but thinks I to myself, why has he not wrote to his father himself? Well, I thinks, it is not my business to dive into all this, all you have got to do is to deliver your message. Off I went to Sir Walter and told him. His eye brows allmost covered his eyes, and at the same time he gave me a most piercen look.

"Well, Dalgleish, I suppose he must be a foot soldier just now. Let him remain so untill he thinks it proper to write to me on the subject. I suppose he will think that I will send him money emediatly, and then all right. I shall send verrey little money untill I write to sune of my good friends to look out for a horse for him, and as soon as they have picked one up, I shall send the price of it to them, so you may return an answer to him to that effect."

"Very well, Sir Walter, I shall do so."

"I left the room goine to write my letter; his bell rings, up I went.

"Delay writing untill to-morrow."

"To-morrow comes, "I shall write Capten Scott, perhaps he will think that I am angry with him if I do not write."

"Indeed, Sir Walter, he will not think wronge."

"It is no easy matter; there will be not less than sixty or seventy pound all at a wheep. Well, well, I must just rise an hour earlier, and sit an hour later, for he cannot want (lack) a charger, but I may well say he is the charger and I am the payer."

"Sir Walter wrote to Capten Scott, and in a few days after gets an answer to his letter stating that he had gote a charger, and what a fine animal it was, not forgetting to let Sir Walter know the price. Sir Walter ringing his bell, I went up.

"I have gote an answer to my letter to Capten Scott, and he informs me he has got a charger, and the price is sixty-five pound if paid at the month's end from the time he bought him. If longer it is to be sixty-five guineas, so you had better go through to Galashiels and call upon Mr. Gibson, and draw a hundred pounds and I shall send the price of the charger."

"I did accordingly. So Sir Walter sent the hundred pounds and told him that if any more chargers died on his hands that he must charge upon foot; for divell another charger he would pay for. "I hope you will let me hear from you as soon as this reaches you, and may you enjoy good health to use your charger."

"Sir Walter informed me that it was a month from the time he wrote Capten Scott untill he received any answer from him. I was doine sumething in the entrance hall when Sir Walter came out of his study. "What is this you are doine? Now, Dalgleish, you are never at rest; I see you must always be employed. Well, it is good for the health. I have gote a letter from Capten Scott."

"All right, Sir Walter, I hope?"

"The poor Capten has ben confined to ospittel (hospital) but is getting better. His charger turning out well. So I think things are looking straight with us yet. I am off for a dander." This was to have a walk.'

XVII.

'As Sir Walter Scott allways went to the sirket (circuit) Court, Jedburgh, there was one time that I neglected to take a white neckcloth for him to go to Court with, and at the time that Sir

Walter was dressing I was out of the way, or then I could have procured one to him. Well as Sir Walter was acquainted with Mr. Short's family, he would not use the freedom to ask one, so he went to court with his black silk one. The court being over, here comes Sir Walter down the Street. Meets him. "Well, Dalgleish, this is a fine trick you have played me."

"Me, Sir Walter? What have I done?"

"You have neglected to bring a white neckcloth to me to go into court with, and the fine is ten pound providing they be pleased to put it in force. Here comes one of the officers, I should not wonder but he is after us, for they are sharp fellows, and I believe they get some of the fine to themselves."

"So with this Sir Walter stepped on. I made up to the officer and ast him if the court was over. "Yes."

"Do you know if Sir Walter Scott has left court yet?"

"Yes, Sir Walter went down the street a few moments ago. Do you want to see him? If you do I will direct you where you will find him. He always stops with Mr. Short when he comes to Jedburgh."

"Thank you. I know where it is. Good morning."

"No sooner had I gote quit of the officer, than I went to Sir Walter and told him that I had spoken to the officer but no word of his cuming after us.

"Sir Walter bursted out with laffing. "Oh, dear, I only told you of the circumstance so that it might impress upon your memory not to forget such a thing again. It is against the rules of court to go in with a coloured neckcloth, but I never knew of it being put in force. Now as you are here, I let you know that I sleep here, and we will start for Abbotsford to-morrow morning by six o'clock, so we will be home to breakfast, as I am anxious to be there. I shall not want you untill bedtime."

"So I went to see the pleasures of Jedburgh. Gote him to bed at ten o'clock.

"Now, Dalgleish, where do you sleep? I hope they will not allow you to sleep in."

"I do not know whare I am to sleep yet."

"You ought to have procured a bed before this time."

"I have aquaintance whare I will get a bed, and if they cannot, they will procure one for me."

"I hope so," says Sir Walter.

"So off to my friends I goes. All to bed. Chaps (knocks).

"Who is there?"

"A friend."

"You just need to be a friend cuming at this time of night."

'As soone as the door was opened I ast if they could let me have a bed for the night.

"I must see who you are furst before I answer that question."

'As the fire was covered up there was allmost no light, so he lighted a spunk (match) and held it into my face.

"Good gad, is it you? A bed I will give you. Two if you like."

'He was not long of rousing the fire and lighten a candle.

"Oh man, if I had send it was you, I would not have been at so much cerimoney with you."

"Yes," says I, "a great dale of cerimoney indeed. A lighted spunk, holding it into one's face. I shall make Sir Walter laff at the kind of cerimoney that is used in Jedburgh."

'So I told Sir Walter on our way to Abbotsford. Sir Walter laffed herty, and said he would not forget Jedburgh cerimoney. Sir Walter told this at a party where he was dining, but furst ast the company if they knew the Jedburgh cerimoney. They laffed herty at the cerimoney.'

XVIII.

'There was one day Sir Walter says to me, "Dagleish, you know a good deal of my mind."

"You tell your mind pretty free at times, Sir Walter."

"Yes," says Sir Walter, "and that lets you allmost know my thought."

"No, no, Sir Walter. If I did I would be apt to take up the quill and see who could make the best of it."

"Well," says Sir Walter. "That is—for a pound—I think I will make more of it."

XIX.

'When Miday the stagghound died, Sir Walter ast me where I thought he should bury him.

"I think, Sir Walter, he should not be buried a tall."

"What would you do with him?"

"I would have him stuffed."

"He certainly would look well if he was. I will take a thought of it."

'But Sir Walter being so busily employed writing and giving orders about the entrance hall, how it was to be arranged, that he

forgote that Miday was dead. So I says to him, "You are certainly neither goine to stuff or bury Miday."

"I entirely forgote. But if not too late I will do him both ways."

'We went and took a look at Miday, but too late, for the hair was cuming off. So Sir Walter was at a loss whare to have him laid.

"I think, Sir Walter, you ought to put him in his old favouret place; you know that it was in the front of the house whare he usto lie, and watch your cuming out to go along with you to get a lark with you."

"Well, there he shall lie, and we will have him put below to-morrow, and I will have his likeness cut oute of stone, and place it over him, and for this reason, he was not amiss for bringing people to the ground, and I have no doubt but he will be a means of raising many from the ground. After his likeness is placed over him, it will make a butifull louping-on stone. I have no doubt that Miday will be very useful."

The great clumsy louping-on stone or horse-block, shaped roughly in the image of Maida and adorned with a couplet of Latin lines, is one of the objects to which the attention of tourists is called,

'So we got Miday into his place of rest, and many a one mounted their steeds off his back.

"Now, Sir Walter, there must be a drop of sumething to keep us in remembrance of Miday, once your favourite."

"I leave that to you, Dalglish."

"Yes, Sir Walter, but I thought it as well to let you know of it."

"I suppose you would have had it whether you told me or not."

'I gave the ladies a tasting; they went off; the gentlemen quaffed theirs off. Now for the servants who had all the work to do to dig the grave, cover it in and what not, so I gave them a bottle of whisky, which I thought quite sufficient. As they were enjoying themselves in cumes Sir Walter, and calls out if Tom Purdie was there, at the same time gives the door a pock (poke) with his stick, it flies open on Thomas in the act of raising himself from his seat. "No, no, Tom, don't disturb yourself. I only want to let you know that if to-morrow is a fine day I wish you to go along with me to the woods."

'As Sir Walter was in the act of leaving, you could not hinder

Thomas to tell Sir Walter that it was the shabbiest dredgie (or dirgie = entertainment at a funeral) that ever he beheld ; only a poor glass of whisky each ; " it is not worth the cuming for."

" Well, Thomas," says Sir Walter, " you must try and coax Dalgleish, perhaps he will let you have a flaggon of ale to wash the bad taste of the whisky out of your mouths, but at the same time, Dalgleish is master, he can do as he thinks proper in these matters."

" God's mercy," says Tom, " are you no master of your own drink ?"

" No, Tom. Dalgleish has charge and I have the purse, and that is all the difference, so when the accounts cumes in he brings them to me and makes me turn out my pockets."

" Well, I never knew that before. By me faith we need not cume to you if we want a drope, since you have no power."

' At bedtime Sir Walter ast if I give them their ale.

" Yes, Sir Walter, they got their ale and sumething more. They were just in the spirit of having a wee drope, so I doosed them. Poor Thomas was carried over."

" Gad, I will roast him to-morrow."

" He will roast me furst I am thinking, for his craw before he turns out with you."

" Oh yes, give him his craw."

' Here cumes Thomas the next day.

" Good morning, Mr. Purdie," says Sir Walter. " I hope you are in good fettle this morning to go along with me."

' I have ben better, Sir Walter, and I durna say anything to Dalgleish, for I understand that I had given him sune of the tongue plaig last night."

' Sir Walter, understanding what he wanted, says : " Cume away with me, I will see if Dalgleish will have compashon on you for my sake, for if I don't, you will not be of much use to me until you have a drope. I have a request to make, Dalgleish, that you will extend your charity upon poor Thomas, for he is not well this morning."

' So I gave him a good craw and off they set. Came home both tired. So got orders to let Thomas have his dinner, and sumething to drink. All right again. So when I see Sir Walter he says, " Thomas should have his craw killed every morning, for it makes him quite a different man. Wrought verrey hard. Well, Thomas, have you gote dinner ?"

" Yes, Sir Walter, as much as I can both eat and drink."

“ Well, Dalglish will know what to do when I want a good day's work—just to kill your craw.” ’

XX.

Thomas Mathews, the comedian and ventriloquist, was at Abbotsford in January, 1826.

‘ There was a gentleman of the name of Mr. Mathews, a great acquaintance of Sir Walter's, came from London to Abbotsford, and as he was to stop for a week there was company ast to meet him. So during the week Mathews keepet the whole house in mirriment. While Mathews was acting sune of his black art tricks there was no respect of persons. All assembled in the drawing-room unless one who looked after the under part of the house. Mr. Mathews came to me and ast me what character I would take. I said I did not understand what was to be done, therefore I could not take any character.

“ Sir Walter, what do you say Dalglish is to be ? ”

“ I think just what he is. He makes a very good butler.”

“ Well, Dalglish, I will let you. Here, how do you draw Sir Walter's corks ? ”

‘ In one moment there is one gone, which makes me jump off my feet, and sune of the onlookers screeched out aloud. He drew two more and with a vengeance too. “ That is your character and trade.”

“ Now, Sir Walter, what do you say for the coachman ? ”

“ Exactly what he follows after.”

‘ In cumes the noise of carrage and horses, and the whip crack-ing, and you might have bound all there was in the room with a straw.

“ Well, Sir Walter, what do you say for the footman ? ”

“ You had better keep him as such.”

“ Well, Lady Scott, I never thought that your ladyship would have evened yourself to scold John, and John you, but I think you will agree again.” So here Lady Scott at poor John, and John will stand none of hir bad humour, so John retalliates and there is such a dust betwixt them. After it was settled hir Ladyship came forret to John, “ Good god, John, what is the matter that you have such a spite at me ? I am sure we have always been on good terms for the last four years.”

“ Yes, my lady, and I hope we will be so still.”

"Well, well," says Mathews. "I told you they would agree again."

"It is too tedious to go through all the characters, but there was not a night during his stay but he was at work, which kept the house in an uproar of laughter, as I said to Sir Walter that I had heard of witches and warlocks, but if he had not something of that kind about him, there was worse; for no man could go through such devilish tricks without something uncommon about them."

"He will laugh heartily when I tell him you think he is a warlock——"

"Two days after Mr. Mathews had been at Abbotsford it was proposed that the ladies, Sir Walter and Mr. Mathews, would go and have a view of Newark Castle. The ladies in the carriage, Sir Walter and Mr. Mathews upon horseback, and John to go along with them to hold their horses. All is off, and a most delightful day. So I thought I would have a dander in the garden. I would have been about two hours, and as I was on the brink of leaving, I observed a person coming upon horseback and at a verrey slow pace. When they came in full view I observed it was John the footman. So I made towards him as soon as he entered the gateway which leads into the front of the house, to see what was the matter."

"Behold, here is poor John fast asleep! I wakened him, and no sooner was he roused from his slumber than he lost the seat of the saddle and came to the ground, and no sooner up than he was where he was. Came to himself in a moment, and as to what he was doing here, at the same time looking at his watch. "Oh," says he, "it is of no use for me to go any farther, for they are at the castle before this time. Well, I shall put up the mare and be prepared to have a good hurry when they come home."

"Here they come."

"Daggleish, John left us. I hope he is not very ill?"

"No, Sir Walter."

"What is the matter with him?"

"He is quite recovered, Sir Walter."

"Mr. Mathews would be down to see him."

"Oh, Sir Walter, I will send him up to you."

"If he is that well—yes."

"So up John goes."

"Well, John, how do you feel yourself?"

"Feel myself? What was the matter with me unless the heat of the day, which made me fall asleep, and the mare had

turned round with me, and came home? I mind nothing more until what Dalgleish was saying."

'Sir Walter and Mr. Mathews, instead of being angry, laffed herty at it, and said they would have given a pound if they had had the good luck to have seen him. So Sir Walter says to him, "Do you snuff?"

"Yes, Sir Walter."

"Well, John, next time you ride out with me, see that you have you box well lined inside, so that when you fall droosie, take a good roosing snuff, and that will help to keep you alive." But John was never called upon again after that.'

'Nixt day, being fine, Sir Walter and Mr. Mathews prepares to take a walk, and as they were leaving the entrance hall, Mr. Mathews, turning quickly round, asked me to let him have one of Sir Walter's walking sticks.

"I have it not in my power, but will get the key from him."

'So I handed out seven. He took the furst that came to hand.

"I'm sure, Mathews, you might have made better choice than that," says Sir Walter.

"Nota tall. For this stick belongs to Sir Walter Scott, and that is the thing that makes it a buty, and at the same time it is as ugly as the verrey divell. Well, Dalgleish, since you have been the means of procuring one of Sir Walter's sticks to me, I will make you a present of this one of mines, if it does you no good it will do you no harm, I hope. I have had it this fifteen years and many hundred miles it has gone alonge with me. I gote it from a French doctor who was attending me. I paid him thirty-five pounds for ten days' attendance. He might well give me his old stick and buy to himself a braw new one. If so it happens that anyone should ask you where you fell in with that shabby old stick, tell that you had it from the shabby old Mr. Mathews, the ventriloquist."

'As Sir Walter and Mr. Mathews was goine out, Mr. Mathews turned quickly round: "Isn't Sir Walter and I well matched?"

'They had both a halt in thir walk.

'I giving no answer Mr. Mathews says, "I know you would say yes, but prudence forbids. Well, Dalgleish, what we are deficient of in our underparts we are blist with having that deficiency (made up) in our upper stories, so let us be thankful."

"Amen," says Sir Walter, and off they set, laffing.

'They both cume home quite done out, and ast if I had sume

good porter, for they were so thirsty. I assured Mr. Mathews that it must be good when it belonged to Sir Walter. I brought them a bottle of porter, and drew it, and told them they bid help themselves, for I was in a hurry, and off I ran. I told Sir Walter that I was cooking.

"I am happy that you did not spoil our dinner."

'As I was running downstairs I meets Lady Scott.

"I have not a moment's time to speak to your ladyship," and ran to the kitchen. Hir Ladyship's curosety was rather stirred up when she see me enter the kitchen in such a hurry, and could not speak to hir, so in she cumes.

"Oh, oh, Dagleish cook! Dagleish everything!"

"Please your Ladyship, this is a soup which I made twenty years ago. I beg your pardon, I meane the same kind."

"Well, I shall let you know after dinner what I think of it, and I shall ask the ladies and gentlemen what they think of it, not saying who made it."

'I would not have cared much whether it was spoken about or no, for if it pleased, all the world must have it. That was a fault that Lady Scott had. Hir Ladyship bid give all away. I mean the receipt for cooking or brewing or baking or anything.'

XXI.

'Sir Walter and two English gentlemen went to see Newark Castle. There was a fine luncheon put up for them so they would enjoy themselves when at the castle. There was a cold tongue, a fowel and ham, likewise a bottle of shampayne, a bottle of sherry, knives, forks and plates. It was fastened upon the dikky behind. So off they set.

'When they arrived at the castle, Sir Walter told Peter the coachman to have the luncheon placed on the grass; in the course of an hour they would be back. So Peter went to take the hamper from the dikky, but behold nothing of the kind was there, so when Sir Walter and the gentlemen returned, expecting a good luncheon, there was nothing for them unless part of the ropes which once held it on.

'Instead of Sir Walter and the gentlemen being disappointed, they laffed fit to kill themselves. "Well, Peter, we will not have it in our power to leave our bottles and plates behind us this time to show that sumebody has ben here." Sir Walter always did so.

'When they came home Sir Walter ast me if I was sure I had put the luncheon on the dicky. "On the dicky, Sir Walter. Did Peter not find it there?"

“No. Sume person or persons made us a widow of it. I hope that it fell into some needful neck.”

‘In about a fortnight after there was a box came to Sir Walter by the carrier. So Sir Walter asking me to open it, to the astonishment of us both here is the knives and forks and plates and corkscrew, neatly packed up with a slip of paper lying upon the top. “I hope Sir Walter Scott will forgive the thief of his hamper, and I assure you the contents made me happy for five days.”’

“Well, I would like to find out that thief, not that I would have him punished, for begad I would give him sumething for his honesty in sending back the things. That is what we may call an honest thief.”’

XXII.

‘There was once that Sir Walter Scott and I was travelling and there was a man cuming towards us with seemenly a very heavy load upon his cart, and as the road was rather contracted, Sir Walter ordered the post boy to stop until the carter got past. But instead of passing he came in contact with the chaise. No sooner was we fast than the carter began to give us sume of his carter’s language, which was none of the finest kind. Sir Walter’s eyebrows falling over his eyes, which allways was the case when anything serious took place.

“Well, my good fellow, since it is the case that we are bound, let us try and loose ourselves. You had better come out there and lend a hand, or then I will drive on and take you back again. Indeed, I would as soon be goine back as sitting here.” He cuming out of the carriage at the same time. “Now for it. You are a stout looking fellow, but I doubt three against one will be too hard for you.”

‘The fellow says, “I will do it in ten minutes.”’

“What the divell will you do?” says Sir Walter, lifting his stick at the same time.

‘The carter taking a step backwards (cried), “For godsake do not strike, for I have not altogether recovered from my last threshing that I gote.”’

‘So he and us gote the wheel of the carriage off, and got clear further than a broken panel.

“Now,” says Sir Walter, “I have your name, which is upon your cart, and as I am shirrif of the county, I will have you brought to court.”’

‘Oh, the poor carter was down in the mouth. Begged for all that was good to let him go, and that he would never do the like again.

"Shirrif," says he. "That is Sir Walter Scott. I will call upon Sir Walter and I think that he will let me off."

"Well," says Sir Walter. "After you have seen him let me know what is to be done."

"I will. But where will I find you?"

"Oh, I am stopping at Abbotsford just now."

The poor carter did call upon Sir Walter, and Sir Walter had a good laff at his stupidity, and told him that he was the person who was in the carrage. So the carter beget his pardon, and Sir Walter let him free. "Now," he says, "there is half-a-crown for you, that is for your using such fine language upon the road to the shirrif."

"Good day, Sir Walter. I was sure you would let me off. Never will I do the like again," says the carter, and off he sets, well pleased.

XXIII.

'As Sir Walter had sune parcels to go to London, and wished them to go by that day's mail, there was no time to lose.

"Cume, cume, Dalgleish, hurell them in, and on with the lid."

'I be chance observed that there was not ane of them directed.

"Where does the parcells belong to, Sir Walter? For there is no direction upon them."

"What a lucky thing you told me! There would have ben not less than three hundred pounds thrown to the dogs. Are you fond of writing, Dalgleish?"

"No, Sir Walter."

"What is your reason?"

"Because I am not good at it."

"Verrey well, take these parcels, and direct them."

"They will be verrey plain done, Sir Walter."

"The plainer they are wrote the easier they will read. Get on."

"What goes upon this one?"

"So and So."

'I directed, and Sir Walter did nothing but gave them a look and told me what to put on.

"I think sune of these will be wrong directed, Sir Walter."

"Not a tall."

'I cuming to the last one looked them over.

"What do you mean by not right?"

"Not right spelled, Sir Walter."

"Oh, anything is well enough if it be from Sir Walter Scott."

(To be continued.)

AT THE PAWNBROKER'S.

BY W. F. WATSON.

It cannot be denied that the pawnshop is of inestimable value to multitudes of people, but, like most blessings, it has its evils. The comparative ease with which a loan may be obtained on almost any article makes it so easy to acquire the pawning habit. In every section of society will be found people who always live on credit. No matter their income, they spend it to the full whilst they have it, and pawn or borrow until next pay-day. With old Omar they say :

Ah, take the Cash in hand and waive the rest ;
Oh, the brave Music of a *distant* Drum.

I'm rather afraid my dear old mother was like that. Although father did not earn a big wage, he was never unemployed, and mother worked all day at the sewing-machine, so while we may have been precious close to it, we were never actually on the poverty line. Had the income been carefully and methodically handled, there would have been no need to pawn each week, but care and method were strangers in our house. The cash left over on Saturday after redeeming the pledges was spent very freely, and Monday morning invariably found mother 'broke to the wide,' and 'Uncle' had to provide the wherewithal to pay the rent.

Rarely did we youngsters attend school on Monday—we had to carry the bundle ! Having wrapped our Sunday suits into a more or less neat parcel, mother would stand at the door as though looking for a passing milkman, baker or sweep, but really to see 'if the coast was clear.' As soon as we heard 'It's all right, now,' away we scampered to 'Uncle's,' there to await mother's arrival. What mattered if other mothers were doing likewise ; what mattered if each one was aware of the other's movements ; what mattered if they *did* meet at the pawnshop—and maybe took a glass of gin together at the tavern next door. So long as they were not actually seen leaving the house with a suspicious-looking bundle, the god of respectability was appeased ! The process would probably be repeated on Tuesday and Wednesday—and Thursday, if anything pawnable was left. On Saturday night came the 'redemptions,' we

kiddies being the 'redeemers.' The cubicles of the pawnshop would be crowded with boys and girls from eight to twelve years of age (I could not have been more than eight or nine, for I was at work at ten) clamouring for the pledges. I can recall the fascination with which I watched the pawnbroker deftly pin the parcels—as only pawnbrokers can pin—amid running comments with his customers.

'Now then, you youngsters . . . a little less noise . . . can't hear ourselves speak . . . wish your mothers would come for the parcels. All right, Mrs. Brown, you're next. . . . How many? Five? Right. . . . That will be twenty-five shillings and ninepence. Thank you, Mrs. Brown. . . . Now, then! Any more tickets?' (Chorus of 'Ere yar, guvnor,' from the children.) 'All right! All right! Keep quiet, you noisy rascals. . . . Good evening, mother! How are you this evening? What. . . ! Only four this week. . . ? H'm. . . . !' Going to the shoot and placing the tickets in a linen bag attached to a cord, he would bawl, 'Coming up there! Hi! Have you all gone to sleep up there? Let's have some more parcels down. . . !'

Flop, plonk! Flop, plonk! came the boots and suits, sheets and blankets, followed by cries of 'That's mine, guvnor,' from those who recognised their pledges. That was a regular Saturday night's entertainment for thousands of kiddies forty years ago.

After pawning, many women would purchase the meat and vegetables for dinner, and then adjourn to the 'Bubble and Squeak' (the taverns were open all day) to partake of 'a quartern of gin, two out, please' with their cronies. As is customary with these convivial gatherings, one quartern led to another, tongues wagged, time flew, and dinner had to be prepared. It was no uncommon sight to see women peeling potatoes and cutting greens in the pub—knives being loaned by the obliging publican—whilst children played about in the sawdust or sand, according to the particular carpet favoured by 'boniface'! And if the money 'petered out before thirsts were assuaged, women would openly and unashamed peel off a garment, take it to 'Uncle's,' get ninepence or a shilling on it, and return to the tavern for 'another quartern, three out please, dear!'

'I've seen them do it hundreds of times,' a publican's wife told me last week, 'and whilst they had gone to the pawnshop I half-filled the measure with water. I gave them pawning petticoats for gin. . . !'

Thus did some publicans wax wealthy on the follies of the poor!

Some craftsmen were equally bad. A few would decide one afternoon that work had no charms for them—they would stay in the 'Turnip and Trotter' supping the beer; the job could wait until the morrow! When the 'bank' dried up, off would come a waistcoat—or one would go into the shop for some tools—into 'Uncle's' for a loan, and back into the tavern!

Have conditions improved since then? Not to a very great extent. True, it is no longer easy to keep children away from school; true also children are not allowed on licensed premises. Culinary work is no longer done in public-houses, and modern industrial conditions preclude the possibility of workmen losing time. But in the mean streets of any city, habitual pawnners are as plentiful as ever. They may not drink quite so much as formerly, but, ever chasing an elusive fortune, they back horses and football teams, gamble in sweepstakes; or they go to the pictures two or three times a week. Occasionally one will see a child of school age carrying a bundle to the pawnshop—one can always see boys and girls swarming 'Uncle's' on Friday and Saturday, redeeming pledges. In any working-class district, on any Monday morning, women may be seen outside the 'Golden Fleece,' purse and pawnticket in hand, awaiting the opening of the magic doors!

What do they pawn? All sorts of things. The hard-bitten habitual pawnner will try to raise money on any old thing, but generally it is wearing apparel. On Monday there will be a preponderance of Sunday suits and overcoats: frocks, costumes and ladies' coats; boots, and the like. They are the regulars!

'How much?' asks the pawnbroker mechanically, recognising an 'old timer.'

'Same as last week!' comes the nonchalant reply.

'Can't be done this week, missus. You've had a pound every week for about three months . . . fifteen bob?'

'Now, come on, George! Don't be mingy. . . . Make it a "quid." It ain't worn much. . . !'

'Isn't worn much! Look at it! No. Can't be done. I'll make it seventeen and six!'

'All right, misery! Got 'em this morning, ain't you?'

And the odds are that the good lady will have to go home for another pledge to make up the pound she expected.

On Tuesday and Wednesday it may be anything. Here's an old lady, struggling with a huge bundle—she can scarcely mount the steps and get along the narrow passage. The paper round the

bundle is scanty, and through the corners can be seen the edges of a blanket, a quilt, and some sheets. There is a young matron carrying a suit over her arm. On payment of a penny or twopence extra, the pawnbroker will obligingly hang it up so that it will not get creased. A neatly dressed young woman without a parcel nervously enters a cubicle, and offers a ring, or some other piece of jewellery. Obviously she is not used to it. On Thursday they will bring to 'Uncle' curtains, blinds, rugs, carpets, fire-irons, clocks, vases, pictures, mirrors, brushes and combs, the daughter's manicure set. The flat-iron used to be regularly pawned, ninepence being the standard loan. Some will bring the week's clean linen. I have seen a pledge made up of a collection of nondescript under-garments, threadbare and mostly full of rents. After telling the woman that the whole lot is not worth twopence, the pawnbroker advances half a crown. He knows it will be redeemed on the morrow. Many a woman strips the bed of sheets and blankets to raise enough for Thursday's meals!

It is a curious fact that some of the women who regularly pawn the family's garments possess jewellery on which they could raise far more than they do on the clothes! The reason, I imagine, is psychological. They fear they would not trouble to redeem a piece of jewellery, and might lose it; they *must* redeem the old man's suit and the daughter's costume!

I don't think England possesses a pawnshop like the one that exists in Barcelona, where, we are told, birds and animals are taken as pledges. All kinds of animals, from elephants to performing snakes, have been pledged in the shop. The business is connected with that of buying and selling circus animals, and while it is seldom that anyone wants to pawn a lion or an elephant, it is quite a frequent occurrence for circus proprietors to pawn camels, horses, performing bears, and dogs. No interest is charged, the profit being made by charging for maintenance. One of the most curious parcels to be pledged in the establishment was a collection of performing snakes, pawned by a woman snake-charmer who had not enough money to return to her native country. She redeemed her 'pets' several months later. A large bear, pledged by the owner, had an enormous appetite, and his owner could not redeem him. As no one would buy such a hungry creature, he had to be killed before his food bill ruined the establishment.

To those industrious citizens of all grades who normally strive to make ends meet, but who, having fallen on evil times, are com-

pelled to pawn, 'Uncle' is indeed a useful and obliging relation. To such people pawning, especially for the first time, is a dreadful ordeal—like going to the dentist!

Walter has been unemployed for some time and has reached the end of his resources.

'I'm afraid we'll have to pawn something, Mildred!'

'Is it as bad as that, Walter?'

'Yes, my dear. I'm broke. . . . If I could only get a job this week . . . damn nuisance. . . !'

A few minutes' silence.

'What can we take, Walter?' Mildred elevates her eyebrows.

'There's my watch and chain. . . ?'

'Oh, don't take that, dear. . . . Mum and dad would be so upset if they knew. . . !'

More silence.

'I know!' exclaims Mildred, brightly. 'That watch you bought me. . . !'

'No, no, Mildred . . . not that. . . !'

Another pause.

'I suppose you'll take it?' suggests Walter, hopefully.

'Oh, Walter! Really, I should be terrified—I'd die of fright . . . !'

'All right, my dear. Don't go piping your eye about it! I'll take it. I'm not afraid of any blooming pawnbroker!'

He sallies forth with buoyant step. As he nears the shop his step becomes less springy. Anxiously he looks all round, hoping no one he knows will see him enter the place. Ah! There's 'Uncle's,' on the opposite side of the road, the golden balls glistening in the sunlight. Walter crosses the road and stands on the kerb as though waiting for a bus. This won't do, he muses. It's got to be done. Walking towards the shop he peers down the narrow passage, passes, and stands looking vacantly in a shop window. Six times does he pass and repass the pledge office, and then, with an exclamation of despair, he dashes in, enters a cubicle, and gingerly lays the watch on the counter.

'How much?' gruffly asks the pawnbroker, with a shrewd glance at Walter.

'Fifteen shillings,' replies Walter, tremulously.

'Fifteen shillings!' echoes the man after a swift examination of the watch. 'What do you think this place is, a philanthropic institution?' He replaces the watch on the counter.

'How much can you lend me?'

'Six and sixpence,' is the laconic reply.

'Can't you make it ten shillings?' pleads Walter.

'Six and sixpence!' There is no mistaking the finality in the voice.

Walter picks up money and ticket and flees from the place bathed in perspiration. That's exactly how I felt, but one gets used to it in time. Whenever possible, the pawnbroker will make the loan an odd sixpence—it's more profitable.

It is a popular belief that pawnbrokers will advance two-thirds of the value of a pledge, and that pledges of watches and jewellery are marked by the pawnbroker. Some years ago I was advanced a pound loan on my watch, which I redeemed as soon as I was able. A month later it had to go 'up the spout' again, and naturally enough I took it to the same shop.

'Same as before,' said I in reply to the pawnbroker's usual question.

'Same as before!' he echoed. 'What do you mean?'

'A pound!'

'I can't lend you a pound on this,' he replied decisively.

'Why?' I asked in surprise. 'I redeemed it from here less than a month ago! If you look inside the case you'll see your mark.'

'Oh!' said he. 'So you're one of those sanguinary fools who think we mark watches, are you?'

'Well! That's what I've always believed.'

'Yes. I know. There's a lot of silly people like you about. You're wrong. No pledge is ever marked by us.'

'Anyway, you lent me a pound on it before.'

'That may be. But I'm not going to lend you a pound now.'

'All right!' said I, picking up the watch. 'I'll try elsewhere!'

As soon as the next pawnbroker to whom I tendered it picked up my rolled gold Waltham hunter, I knew I should get the pound I wanted. The man obviously loved that type of watch. Gently rubbing his fingers over the case he caressed it for all the world as though it was a beautiful woman's face, and when he opened it to examine the works, a fond smile lit up his face. I don't think he spoke at all. When I said, 'A pound, please,' he snapped to the case, laid the timepiece down with a sigh, and wrote the ticket out without demur.

It was raining one May morn when I left home to seek work, but it quickly cleared up. My topcoat was heavy and I didn't want to carry it about all day, so I thought I would dump it in 'Uncle's.'

'Take that away!' said he as soon as he saw it. 'Overcoats this time of the year! Bring it back in October and I'll see what I can do for you!'

It is generally supposed that a pawnbroker must not accept war medals as pledges, but this difficulty is easily got over by pinning them to a waistcoat. The loan is advanced on the garment, not the medals.

Whilst waiting for my ticket one day, an old chap entered the cubicle and plonked down a parcel wrapped in an apron.

'Hullo!' said the genial 'uncle,' 'what have we got here?'

And he laid out a paperhanger's brush, a large pair of pincers and a scraper.

'What are you, old chap! A dentist?'

'No, sir!' replied the man. 'I'm a painter.'

'A painter! I thought you were a dentist. These are forceps, aren't they? And this looks like a toothbrush, and scraper! How much? Ninepence?'

It used to be the practice years ago for mechanics, when finishing up a job, to leave their heavy box of tools at the nearest pawnshop instead of taking them home, to be redeemed when they obtained work elsewhere. Opening the box and seeing some tools on top, the pawnbroker would advance a loan in anticipation of a quick redemption. They were not always redeemed, however, and many a pawnbroker has found himself burdened with a box of bricks and scrap-iron, with just a few tools attractively laid on top!

Speaking of tools reminds me that it was fairly easy thirty years ago to get good money on engineers' small tools. The industry was booming, opportunities for making one's tools were lessening, and small-tool manufacturers had scarcely started. Consequently they were at a premium, and pawnbrokers welcomed calipers, squares, dividers, surface and slide gauges, and the like. Now the average 'uncle' might know all about the value of precious metals and stones, and of furniture and clothes, but he could not be expected to assess the value of tools he did not understand, and many a one has been persuaded to advance a loan on indifferent tools far in excess of their value. I knew a group of mechanics who, for a time, made an income by making up dud tools (in the employer's time of course) specially for pawning. They were absolutely worthless, but as they were nicely polished, it was easy for the plausible pawnbroker to persuade the unsophisticated pawnbroker that they were valuable tools!

It is quite different to-day. A pal of mine could get only seven shillings and sixpence on a parcel of tools worth at least four pounds, and when he tried, later, to get more, he had great difficulty in getting a further half-crown.

This is not difficult to understand. The thousands of workers who entered the factories during the war bought themselves tools of all kinds, which they disposed of when they left the shops, and, there being few new entrants into the trade, the market is limited, and the pawnshops are overstocked with such tools.

An unredeemed pledge shop has a great fascination for me. Gazing in the expansive window, I try to imagine the romance, the tragedy, or the comedy behind each article therein displayed. Why did the owner pawn that beautifully chased old English watch? Was it an heirloom, passed down through the generations until stern necessity compelled some old couple to (as they thought) temporarily part with it? Apparently they did not want to lose it or it would probably have been sold to a jeweller!

And what is the story behind that sewing-machine, that fifteen-year-old gramophone, those old opera glasses, that mandoline, cornet, violin, banjo? Tears may have been shed over the pawning of those engagement rings heaped higgledy-piggledy in a tray! Maybe the young married couples looked forward to the time when they would be able to redeem them, but, alas, Fate was against them. How came that beautiful family Bible to be in a pawnshop—an intimate volume exposed to the vulgar gaze of a non-understanding public?

Those carpets, rugs, mats, clocks, vases, typewriters, curtains, quilts, blankets, sheets, boots, shoes, mathematical instruments—oh, heavens! all things and everything. What tragedy, romance, comedy lies behind those inanimate articles!

I see suites of furniture, beds and bedding, bicycles, billiard tables, bassinettes; trombones, trumpets, pianos and organs. Down in the right-hand corner there lies a tray of miscellaneous tools of a bygone age. If I shut my eyes for a moment, I can see the men who, with consummate skill, fashioned those rude implements with which they helped to make the modern mechanical marvels of to-day, until, overtaken by old age, they crept to the pawnshop to raise a little money on things they had made, but for which they had no further use.

And, with a sigh, I turn away, wondering . . . wondering . . . wondering. . . .

THE DUCHESS AND THE DIAMOND.

BY CHARLES LLOYD-JONES.

'LEND me a hundred pounds,' said the Duchess, and continued powdering her small nose.

The restaurant was crowded: the band, inconsiderately, was silent. It was therefore impossible to tell the Duchess exactly what I thought of her. Even waiters have their feelings; and our waiter did not look as if he were accustomed to hear between diners the only kind of speech the Duchess really understands as a refusal of a loan.

I was not surprised at the request. When the Duchess, who is never short of invitations, asks formally to be taken out to dinner by her elderly unexciting uncle, she usually wants something.

The Duchess, I should explain, is not a duchess. She is the Contessa Elizabeth Anne Piccione Macchietato. Count Piccione Macchietato wooed her in Cheltenham, believing that she was rich. She married him and went with him to visit his family's estate in Canada. But the estate turned out to be a restaurant and the hard-working family knew the Count too well to trust him for the price of a meal. The Count went back to his pre-matrimonial occupation, trick-bicycling in a circus. The Countess came back to England, undismayed except by her title.

'If I say I'm a countess,' she had explained with suspicion-stirring frankness, 'people might think I'm a real countess, an English one. But no one could possibly think I'm a real duchess.'

That has nothing to do with this story; but it is a fair example of the lady's attempts to be honest and logical.

'I really must have a hundred pounds,' the Duchess repeated with a sigh. 'It isn't for myself.'

'I haven't got a hundred pounds,' I said, and passed the menu. If the money were not actually for herself she might forget the need of it by the time she had chosen a sweet.

'But you could borrow it,' she said simply.

'Are you sure it's not for yourself?'

'Absolutely. I gave that horrible Amelia Thrump a ring for a wedding present, and that little toad of a jeweller, Spatstein, is

pressing me for the money. My dear, it hasn't been owing six months.'

'It's rather a lot to owe for a present to a woman you don't like,' I said, knowing that I was not being helpful.

'But you stupid man, if people are fond of you, you haven't got to give them expensive presents. You ought to have seen that ring. Amelia was positively humiliated by the beauty and the price of it. She's never forgiven me. So you must lend me the money.'

I shook my head.

'But if Spatstein sues me, everyone else will sue me. And he means it, the brute.'

She passed me a letter, in confidential longhand on thick white paper. It was as nicely balanced a composition of unctuousness and menace as ever a jeweller penned. But there was a hint in the last sentence that Mr. Spatstein would see reason. Indeed, he seemed to be so much afraid of never seeing his money that he was ready to take the ring back at cost and call the whole bargain off.

'You'll have to confess to Mrs. Thrump, and get the ring back,' I said.

'I knew you'd say that,' the Duchess sniffed. 'Have you paid for your wife's last birthday present yet?'

'I haven't even paid for her last birthday present to me.' I hoped to dazzle her off that line of argument by a little unexpected brightness.

The Duchess was silent. But I was afraid she was not silenced. Nor was she.

'I've got an idea,' she said. 'We'll go and stay with Amelia for the week-end.'

'Who are "we"?''

'We? Why, us. Me and you.'

'But I hate the woman.'

'Uncle darling, all the more reason why you should help me. Now listen.'

The Duchess grasped her coffee-spoon like a dagger. All dimples and devilry, she leant across the table and made the most shameful propositions in the voice of an angel.

'I won't have anything to do with it,' I said vehemently, and hoped to be believed.

Yet I went with her in her unsporting sports-car on the next Saturday, tearing a ginger-coloured, machine-gun-voiced scar across the unoffending country, to the riverside home of Amelia.

On the way down I explained : ' Remember, Anne, it's only for the sake of your dead father I am doing this. And I'm never going to be dragged into anything like it again.'

She took both hands off the wheel and shook her tiny fists in my face.

' Uncle Egg,' she retorted (as if it were my fault that I have a lofty forehead and not much hair), ' if there's any more back-chat I shall tell your wife that you're *not* really going to Amelia's to tell her whether some picture she's just bought for a fiver is by Titian. I'll bet that's the excuse you've made.'

My wife does not see why anyone should lift a finger to help the Duchess, and had to be told something.

' You're an ungrateful hussy,' I said : but said no more for fear she might take her hands off the wheel again. If I must do anything at all, I preferred lying for the Duchess to dying for her. Owing entirely, I believe, to my self-control we arrived without accident.

We waited in the loggia overlooking the long garden that ran down in terraces to the river. Amelia and her other guests were just landing from two punts. The Duchess catalogued them for me as they came nearer.

' That thing with a thin beard is James Townsend Suffering. He's got a weak stomach and diplomas of Nebraska University for psychology and deep-sea navigation. Amelia says he understands her foulest repressions. He's beastly rich.

' That old thing with a red face and a naughty eye is Spencer Hewstean. He's got no diplomas, but he's frightfully learned. He's a friend of Amelia's husband.

' There's Poppy Sevenashe. You know her, of course. Hell ! I wish I could remember whether I'm knowing her or not. Never mind. She seems to be red-haired now. For the sake of peace I can pretend it was someone else I wasn't going to know any more.

' Oh ! And there's Margery Faggatt. You'll love her.'

Why I should love Margery I had not time to learn then. The party was upon us. Amelia was sniffing the air about an inch from the Duchess's cheek. Mr. Suffering was saying : ' I am very pleased indeed to have meet me socially a gentleman whose work I have admired for many years.'

I was the admired gentleman. Amelia, to make the most of her guests, must have told him that I was an author. I once compiled a two-thousand-word history of our village church to oblige the

rector. But Amelia and Mr. Suffering apparently understood each other. It was not for me to come between them by spoiling her story. Amelia's husband was away through no fault of his own.

There was here certainly a richer soil than I had expected for the ripening of the Duchess's plot. I was afraid only of Spencer Hewstean. His looked an eye to see through humbug, and lips likely to laugh at an inconvenient moment.

I waited until I could get Amelia by herself before I planted the seed. Dinner was over. It had been an illuminating, but not an illuminated, meal. We had sat in the misty summer dusk, with four coloured candles emitting just sufficient light to emphasise the dark corners of Amelia's tapestry-draped dining-room. Two ascetic-faced maids in black had glided silently over a thick dark carpet. James Suffering had been psychological; Amelia and Poppy had been psychic. The Duchess had nearly ruined my appetite by giving details of the disgusting misfortunes she swore fell upon all disturbers of Egyptian tombs.

That was a considerable feat of imagination on her part: for until I had primed her she had thought that Tut-Ank-Amen was a racehorse.

'You're thinking of Papyrus,' I had said.

'I'm not. Tut's a whistling chestnut belonging to Roddie Gallocks, and I lost half a crown on the brute at Hawthorn Hill Races last year.'

So she was partly right. Anyway, I had to apologise. With a hint of the original Tut-Ank-Amen's history on which to build, she had certainly built magnificently. Scourvy, bankruptcy, leprosy, blackmail, two-headed offspring, dropsy and religious mania were, according to the Duchess, among the minor discomforts of those who fell under the dead king's curse.

Coffee was served in the Chinese lounge. Electricity was just able to light up the tiny panes of coloured glass in the fantastic lamps; but, so handicapped, it could not light the room. Here and there beams of light fell on porcelain figures of almost-translated Chinese apostles brooding in alcoves. Amelia and I shared a couch, made (she assured me) out of a rack used by Chinese torturers in the seventeenth century. The other sat in pairs in the half-dark corners of the big lounge. Talk was no longer general.

Amelia was wearing her ring; the Duchess had seen to that. I had been looking at it carefully during dinner. It happened to be (as the Duchess had told me it was) a competent modern copy

of Renaissance jewel-craft, a single diamond in an elaborate gold setting ; of its kind a beautiful ring, but expensive at the price the Duchess owed.

With a fair show of respectful admiration I took Amelia's hand. I am old enough to be safe.

'Forgive the impertinence,' I said quietly, but with a note of surprise, 'but where ever did you get that ring?'

'That pretty little thing? Dear Anne gave it to me for a wedding present.'

'Ah!' I said wisely. 'That would account for it. She must have got it through her late husband's family. You never met Count Piccione Macchietato?'

'Is it Italian?' she said in an off-hand manner.

'Unless I am mistaken, very much mistaken, you're wearing the original Ratto diamond.'

'But how delightful of dear Anne! The Ratto diamond. Fancy her parting with it. The Ratto-es of Florence, weren't they? Of course, the whole family comes into the *Inferno*—or is it the *Decameron*?'

I had just invented the Ratto family, and had intended them to come from Venice. But since Amelia's conceit required them to come from Florence, from Florence they should come.

'It's funny that we were talking about curses at dinner,' I said lightly. 'There's a silly old story about a curse on this ring. That's to say if it really is Baciatrice Ratto's ring.'

'How exciting!' said Amelia, husky with tension, and I saw that Spencer Hewstean had crossed the dusky room and was standing close beside us. His presence made it difficult for me to go on lying with a straight face. I hesitated, and Amelia drew him down on to the couch beside her.

'Do you know what this man has just told me?' she said. 'That this is the original Ratto diamond.'

'Yes?' said Hewstean, politely but non-committally. I wondered how much he had heard.

'May I examine it?' he asked.

Amelia dropped the ring into his hand, and he walked across the room to stand immediately under one of the lamps. The ring lay in his palm in a little pool of clear light. A greenish light from one of the lamp's coloured panes tinged his ruddy face, and gave him as evil a complexion as anyone concocting a tale of horror could wish to see. I saw Amelia look at him and shudder. She

was certainly ripe for a fright. Her tension and huskiness as she had greeted the news of a curse with 'How exciting!' had not been all affected.

I was apprehensive too. I was waiting to hear our little plot exploded by Hewstean's sceptical chuckle, which I had heard a good many times during dinner. But still he was silent. He was examining the ring through a pocket magnifying glass. His forehead was wrinkled. His lips were drawn together.

Deliberately he came back to us. He did not offer the ring to Amelia at once, but addressed me, rather as if he were counsel cross-examining a reluctant witness.

'Do you know the history of this ring?' he said severely.

'Oh, no,' I fenced. 'I've heard of the Ratto diamond, of course. And I'm pretty sure—er—trusting to my memory of an illustration in a book—an old book—that this is the ring. Of course I may be mistaken. I'm not an expert. There is some silly story of a family curse, I believe. But perhaps you've heard of it?'

'Is that all?' he asked, pressing me hard.

'I'm afraid that's all.'

I was letting the Duchess down badly, but she ought to have warned me to expect someone like Hewstean.

And then, from the lips that seemed to have been pressing upon expert judgment, out of the mind behind those humorous deep-seeing eyes came the most surprising words I have ever heard. 'It's a great pleasure to meet anyone with sufficient imagination to recognise the ring from that illustration. I know the illustration well; there is only one; and it's a very bad one. It's in Signora Chiappa Nevosa's book on the jewellers of the Renaissance. There is not the least doubt that this is Baciatrice Ratto's jewel. I only hope, madame,' and he proffered the ring to Amelia, 'that her most unpleasant curse on anyone who presumed to wear it, has expired. There are well-attested instances of the curse at work down to the eighteenth century, but still,' he shrugged his shoulders, 'we live in a practical age, don't we?'

I looked at him hard. Apparently he was perfectly serious. Apparently the family and the curse I had invented were, by coincidence, historically, awesomely true.

'Oh, extremely practical,' Amelia was saying, but without any real assurance, I thought, as she slipped the ring on to her finger.

I sat silent, uncomfortably silent. Amelia was examining the ring on her finger. I could not see her eyes, but I thought her

extended hand was trembling a little. Margery and the Duchess came across the lounge arm in arm.

'Are you morbid creatures still talking about curses?' said the Duchess, who had done all the talking about curses at dinner. She winked approval at me.

'Isn't it frightfully exciting, Anne dear?' said Amelia with a little titter. 'My lovely ring has got a curse on it.'

The Duchess let out a most convincing scream. 'Amelia darling, I'm so sorry. But—whoever told you!'

'Uncle Egg started to. Then Mr. Hewstean agreed with him. In fact, Mr. Hewstean knows the whole story. He's going to tell it to us, aren't you, Mr. Hewstean?'

'Mr. Hewstean?' In her surprise the Duchess nearly gave away the secret that she knew all about the origin of the story. Her blank incredulity had swept all expression from her usually lively eyes. It had swept away too my idea that she had roped Hewstean into the plot without telling me. For, as I recovered from the first shock, I had thought that she must have prompted his amazing corroboration of my story. But she was as bewildered as I was myself.

'Please tell us the story,' Margery put in.

'It's not a very nice story,' Hewstean protested.

But Amelia insisted on knowing the worst. Anyone could see that she would not rest until she was told. Her show of gaiety was painful. Frankly, I felt ashamed of having started the affair; and Hewstean looked uncomfortable.

'It amounts to this,' he said apologetically; 'Baciatrice Ratto had a suitor, a decent young fellow. But unluckily for her, her brothers Guido and Cesare didn't approve of him, and when medieval Italian noblemen disapproved of anyone they didn't stop just at saying so. Baciatrice defied them. So they shut her up in one corner of the castle. They were tactful about it, so as not to advertise their sister's deplorable taste among the ordinary men-at-arms; and when the suitor, disguised as a friar, turned up at the castle and showed Baciatrice's ring as a token of his *bona fides* he was let in by the sentry who was not in the know. He settled the two trusted men on guard outside Baciatrice's tower. But just as Baciatrice and he were on the point of sliding down a rope to the horses he had left waiting, Guido and Cesare burst in.

'The rest of the details are a bit too gruesome for after-dinner conversation. Guido was a devil incarnate. A few of his most

poisonous underlings dealt with Baciatrice and her lover, slowly and elaborately : with the man first, so that Baciatrice could watch. She died game, cursing them, and cursing anyone who ever wore the ring that had brought her man to torture and death.'

Hewstean had finished. The very lightness of his manner, his attempt to skate over the grimmest depths of the story, only accentuated its horror.

'But suppose——' Margery put in, 'suppose some wretched innocent wore it without knowing anything?'

'I don't suppose the poor lady had enough wits left when she cursed to be exactly fair.'

'But I should have thought someone would have pounded the horrible ring to bits years ago,' said the Duchess. She was not, for the moment, a conspirator; but only one of a badly shocked party.

'It's a beautiful ring,' said Hewstean. 'Ladies, fortunately, are always ready to run risks for the sake of beauty. I don't think the risk in this case can be very great. Our hostess doesn't seem to be declining under the curse.'

That simply was not true. Amelia was nearly green with fright; but pride made her keep the ring on her finger.

'There's one consolation,' Hewstean went on, with gallant frivolity, 'next time you take your partner out of a good no-trump and go down three tricks, you can blame the ring.'

Mercifully someone laughed. Someone else seized the opportunity to suggest a game of bridge. We played quite cheerfully until Amelia took her partner, Hewstean, out of no-trumps and did go down three tricks.

'But you can't say it was a good no-trump,' she protested. I saw her glance at the ring.

As the game broke up the Duchess came into the room. She was the last left with Amelia when the rest of us had gone to bed. Puzzled and disturbed by Hewstean's confirmation of my concocted history of the ring, I had forgotten until then that the Duchess meant to get that ring, curse or no curse, before she left the house.

I could not sleep. I tried to read but could not. I did not believe in the curse: but Hewstean's definite story supporting my invention was naggingly on my mind. I stared at the pages of my book and had not decision enough to switch off the light.

A tap on my door made me start as if the roof had fallen in. In walked the Duchess, still fully dressed.

'Of all the pig-headed women——' she began.

'Tell me,' I interrupted, 'is Hewstean in this conspiracy with you?'

'With you, surely. I was flabbergasted when I heard him pitching that story: but then, thinking it over, I knew you must have put him up to it.'

'I didn't.'

'Well,' she said, not to be put off her main point by a little complication like that, 'it's a rotten story, anyhow. I've begged and begged that idiot of a woman to let me take the ring back and give her something else: but she won't part with it. Sheer conceit! She's yellow and grey with funk. But she won't give it up. And I'd thought it was a lovely way to get it off her.'

'Will you ask Hewstean where he got that story? I daren't.'

'Provided you'll lend me the hundred pounds if I can't get that ring.'

'Certainly not.'

'Then I shall be far too busy getting the ring or the money to ask him anything. Good night, Uncle darling.'

The Duchess, I decided not for the first time, is a mannerless hussy.

I had a troubled night. The Duchess got up late. I had no chance of a word alone with her before we were all shepherd down to the river and distributed into punts. Including neighbours who had come to join the party, there were six punts in all. I forgot how, exactly, we were paired off: but Amelia and Hewstean were in one punt, the Duchess and I in another.

The river was swollen. I was quite glad to let the Duchess take a spell with the pole after half an hour. Amelia close to us, was poling her punt: but she was proud of her punting, and a great horse of a woman, anyway. Hewstean was apparently asleep already.

Then, without a second's warning, things happened. Amelia gave an extra hard thrust in deepish water and her pole snapped. She flapped like a distracted, wounded bird. I could see her terror-dilated eyes. Remembering the story of the curse I did not like to think of what *they* saw. She seemed to totter for hours. Watching her was like watching a tight-rope-walker a hundred feet up on a stranded rope, waiting for the treacherous support to give way. The rocking punt swung broadside into the strong current.

A flutter : a cry : a splash. Amelia was in. Hewstean had thrown his weight the wrong way. The punt was over. Hewstean had disappeared.

I clutched a boat-hook. 'Those cursed weeds!' I shouted. Only two hundred yards below the swollen river frothed and thundered over a steep weir.

'Catch!' yelled the Duchess. The punt-pole dropped into my hands. Quick as a conjurer the Duchess was out of her frock. There was a flash of silk and silver skin as she dived.

Hewstean was up again. He was struggling. He was trying to hold Amelia up. But they were being carried swiftly downstream. I sped the punt towards them, towards the increasing voice of the angry weir. But the Duchess, threshing up a wake like a speed-boat's, was there first. She shouted at Hewstean, 'Loose her, you fool. Get yourself out.' A hundred yards from the weir. Seventy-five yards.

All three went under together. I saw Hewstean's once immaculate shoe above water and gripped his ankle, steadying the punt with my pole in the other hand. I could do no more. I dared not shift my pole : I could not pull Hewstean up.

But up the inverted Hewstean the resourceful Duchess dragged herself ; one arm was locked around Amelia's neck. Amelia was past struggling. The Duchess had just the strength to heave her limp body into the punt before I had to turn Hewstean head-upwards. Even then I thought I had drowned him. But he seemed grateful when he got his breath back : he was a philosophical old gentleman.

With wraps provided by the other women on her shoulders, with tears of gratitude provided by Amelia on the back of her neck, the Duchess urged me homeward.

'Amelia dear,' she protested, 'I'm wet enough. Do pull yourself together.'

Rebuffed, Amelia cried by herself. She was very badly overwrought : and, ordinarily, she was a strong swimmer. I could not prevent my thoughts returning to the ring. I looked for it on her hand. It had gone.

The words slipped from me before I could check them :

'You've lost your ring.'

Amelia stared blankly at her hand.

'Thank God,' she said. 'It was that ring that was drowning me,' she said deliberately. 'I felt it. It was dragging me down.'

That hand. Something was dragging me by that hand to the bottom. Then I fainted.'

We were a very quiet party for the rest of the way home. I could not believe in the curse. Yet it was all very uncanny.

I forced myself to tackle Hewstean in the afternoon. Amelia had gone to bed. The Duchess, having no feelings, had gone on the river: to dive for that ring, I supposed. For her opinion of what she called Amelia's carelessness in losing it was unprintable. The party was to break up that evening.

'I wish you'd tell me something more about the history of that ring,' I said to Hewstean. 'I must confess that I invented the Ratto diamond simply for devilment. You remember how we were talking about curses at dinner. The idea of a joke—a rather tasteless one I admit now—came to me when I saw that curious-looking ring. But I admit quite frankly that "Ratto" was the first name that came into my head. It's an extraordinary coincidence.'

Hewstean lit a cigarette before he answered: 'Not very extraordinary. If you make up a story on the spur of the moment, the first name that comes into your head is very seldom one you've invented. It's much more likely to be one you've heard long ago and forgotten. The subconscious memory is a prominent partner in the invention of a great deal that the inventor thinks is original work. Somewhere you must have heard the story of Baciatrice's ring: probably you had even seen the illustration you mentioned. Potted versions of the story crop up in gossip-columns from time to time. The appearance of the actual ring would bring the name back to you. It's very simple.'

We talked for about half an hour. He was a most interesting man. Prompted by his reasoning I was able to recall several cases of unsuspected knowledge surprising its owner. We only dropped the subject when someone shouted 'Tea.' The others were in the lounge. We agreed that the less said about the ring the better.

Immediately after tea the Duchess went to pack. She packed more quickly than I had thought possible, and I was bundled into her dreadful car before I had a chance of another word with Hewstean. We had been so engrossed in the elucidation of my invention that was not an invention after all, that I had not had time to hear more of the actual history of the ring.

I said so to the Duchess. I complained that her hurry was quite unnecessary. I did not see why I should not wait for another talk with Hewstean. For answer the Duchess smiled, a wicked,

impertinent, triumphant smile. She pulled off her glove, and on her finger was the ring that ought to have been at the bottom of the river.

'Did you fish it up?' I asked, amazed.

'Oh no. I had it all the time. I went to the river again to get Amelia's punt-pole. I found both pieces in an eddy below the weir. It'll be very useful if your interesting friend, Hewstean, turns nasty.'

'Turns nasty?'

'Yes. He'd sawn the pole half-through. I felt something was going to happen. That's why I shot into the water and ruined my beautiful curls. I nearly bit his finger off to make him loose the ring. But I don't believe he knows I've got it, even now.'

'But what ever made you suspect him? It was a pretty brilliant bit of work—to overhear two sentences of the story I was beginning; jump to the conclusion that it really was an historical ring worth pinching; find out how little I knew; work the whole story up on the spur of the moment; and then, when his attempt had failed and I've confessed that my story was an invention, carry the whole thing off with a positive lecture on subconscious memory and man's liability to trot out in an emergency some name he's once known and forgotten. Give the man his due: he was pretty quick off the mark.'

'Yes, Uncle darling, that's where he took the lift-shaft instead of the lift. I'd have told you last night, but I thought you'd be more use looking beautifully baffled. Hewstean's no better on the spur of the moment than you are. I *was* knocked back when he "ummed" and "ahed" and said "undoubtedly the Ratto diamond"; but then he told the story. Silly ass. I'd read that story last month in the same magazine as he had.'

However, I still believe that if Hewstean is careful not to try conclusions with any more young women like the Duchess, he will get on.

'PAY, PACK, AND FOLLOW.'

(The message often left behind by Sir Richard Burton for his wife.)

'PAY, pack, and follow': so he said,
The great world-traveller. He is dead.
Pay—whatever the hostel dues;
Pay—whatever we have to use:
 'Pay—pack—and follow.'

'Pay, pack, and follow':—through ageless Ind,
The 'Unhappy Valley' of burning Sind:
Though creeds may cavil, and men may hate,
Ever onward—Kismet: it is Fate.
 'Pay—pack—and follow.'

'Pay, pack, and follow.' I know it well—
The tinkling of his camel-bell;
Arabian nights, Damascus days,
Mecca—and its forbidden ways:
 'Pay—pack—and follow.'

'Pay, pack, and follow':—in his wake
To Tanganyika's hidden lake;
The fever-haunts of the Cameroons;
Brazil's dank forests and dark lagoons:—
 'Pay—pack—and follow.'

'Pay, pack, and follow':—you are gone:
Your last great journey: I follow on:—
To where you wait on that distant shore,
And creed and cavil are no more.—

I have paid; I have packed:—I follow.

C. H. ST. L. RUSSELL.

HOURS IN UNDRESS.

X. JOSEPHUS.

THE life of Joseph ben Matthias, commonly known as Flavius Josephus, is one of the romances of history. He was born in Jerusalem in A.D. 37, the year after the departure of Pontius Pilate. The turning-point of his career was the year of the four Roman emperors, 68-9, and he died at an unknown date shortly after 100. His Hebrew name recalls his descent from the daughter of Jonathan, the High Priest, brother of Judas Maccabaeus, and his Roman name reveals his activity as a learned pensioner of the Flavian emperors, Vespasian and Titus, and, later, of Domitian, whose morbid interest in the commentaries of Tiberius did not encourage a court historian. The two names correspond to the two sections of his career, which were almost equal in length, and the record that he was unhappy with three wives adds a human touch to his political vicissitudes.

The romance—a soiled one in some respects—arises out of historical circumstances. The tragic sixties contained the Jewish war, with the sack of Jerusalem in 70, in which Josephus fought on one side, and which he narrated on the other. He who fights and runs away lives to *write* another day, his ruined countrymen might have said of him, and they have never forgiven him his survival. He owed his life to the chances of the lot, and we owe the story chiefly to his own narrative. Even so, it reflects discredit on him. At the siege of Jotapata, in the spring of 67, his followers rejected his counsels of surrender, and chose the alternative of death, 'for they thought that death, if Josephus might be with them, was sweeter than life.' So he proposed that they should kill one another, each man by lot, till only one was left to commit suicide. 'Yet was he with another left to the last,' Josephus relates of himself, 'whether we must say it happened so by chance, or whether by the providence of God.' Incredulous posterity concluded that it happened neither by chance nor by providence, but by jugglery with the lots. At any rate, he prevailed on his fellow in luck to break the sequel of killing, and to make their way to the enemy's camp. Then came his remarkable prediction,

confirmed independently, that Vespasian, his captor, would become emperor. We do not know what befell his companion, but the fulfilment of his prophecy led ultimately to his own release. It was a precarious safety. The 'bandits,' as he called the Jewish patriots, were always ready to vilify him, and among the Romans, as a renegade seer, any mistake might be interpreted as treachery. It is not easy to be in the right on both sides—not even if, like Josephus, the double dealer writes the history of the transaction; and Josephus, who wrote parts of it twice, was not always consistent in his narrative.

Was he consistent in his acts, or, rather, in the motives which governed them? This problem of psychology is engaging attention to-day in new books by Dr. Foakes Jackson and the late Dr. St. John Thackeray, the Loeb translator of Josephus, and the chief expert on his style and text.¹ But it is complicated by problems of criticism, too technical for discussion in an hour of undress, which have been brought to acute point in this country by the publication of an English version of Dr. Robert Eisler's researches into the 'Slavonic Josephus' ² reconstructed from Russian manuscripts. Extending the previous labours of Popov in 1866 and Berendts in 1906, Eisler ventures to avouch 'that we cannot go on for ever with our traditional histories of New Testament times, into which a life of Jesus cannot be made to fit, and with lives and characteristics of Jesus which cannot be made to fit into the contemporary history of Jews and Romans,' and he re-writes the narrative accordingly. We may suspend judgment on this experiment. But the psychology is at everyone's disposal, and, omitting controversial details, the layman is as competent as the expert. One thing at least is clear. Moving in the shadow of the thirties and in the conflagration of the sixties of the first century, Josephus knew what was going on. He narrated it in the *Jewish War*, and examined its origins in the *Antiquities* and other works, and it is not conceivable that he was unaware of the event which changed the history of the world on the very threshold of his own lifetime. Many of the actors were his contemporaries. He tells us of the governor, Petronius, who, partly by policy and partly by the accident of Caligula's death, prevented an earlier outbreak

¹ Dr. Thackeray died, much regretted, on June 30, 1930.

² *The Messiah Jesus and John the Baptist, according to Flavius Josephus's recently discovered 'Capture of Jerusalem' and the other Jewish and Christian Sources.* By Robert Eisler, Ph.D. With Forty Plates, etc. English Edition by Alexander Haggerty Krappe, Ph.D. London, 1931. 42s.

of the Jewish war against Rome. He tells us of Florus, the procurator, whose rashness precipitated that conflict, and he tells us something about Pilate. A storm of controversy sweeps the question, Does he tell us anything about Jesus? and the answer, unrefuted, is still, Yes. True, his 'testimony to Christ' in the eighteenth book of the *Antiquities*, was not quoted, so far as we know, by anyone before Eusebius, when Christianity had been recognised as the State religion, and thus it may have been added by the censors in order to make the book fit for Christian readers. But its language is less Christian than Josephus, and evidence from style is more convincing than evidence from silence. Josephus, we have to remember, was not much interested in religious reform. The teachings of Jesus, even if he had studied them, would have left him cold. His business was to write up the Jews as a nation of ancient valour, at least as deserving as the Greeks of the respect of the Roman conqueror. This business had to be combined with the justification of Josephus as a Romanising pacifist, and neither object would have been served by making much of the rise of Christianity. It would please neither the Romans nor the Jews, and the disputed passage may be deemed authentic precisely because it says so little, and in such neutral terms. In Dr. Thackeray's version it runs as follows:

'Now about this time arises Jesus, a wise man, if indeed he should be called a man. For he was a doer of marvellous deeds, a teacher of men who receive the truth with pleasure; and he won over to himself many Jews and many also of the Greek (nation). He was the Christ. And when, on the indictment of the principal men among us, Pilate had sentenced him to the cross, those who had loved (or perhaps rather "been content with") him at the first did not cease; for he appeared to them on the third day alive again, the divine prophets having (fore) told these and ten thousand other wonderful things concerning him. And even now the tribe of Christians, named after him, is not extinct.'

Still keeping on this side of controversy, we may note as turns of expression characteristically Josephus 'receive with pleasure,' which is depreciatory, and the contemptuous 'the tribe.' An emendation, hardly noticeable in the Greek, which would alter 'the truth' to 'the abnormal,' would take us out of our proper zone. Keeping within it, however, we may add that the four words, 'He was the Christ,' are generally regarded as an interpolation, and may be omitted without loss. There remains the

'testimony to Christ,' for the sake of which Joseph ben Matthias took rank as a classic of the Christian Church. 'There was a time,' writes Dr. Thackeray, 'when almost every house possessed two books, a Bible and a Josephus, in the old eighteenth-century version of William Whiston'; and Dr. Margoliouth, in his Introduction to that version, says that, 'while persons who aspire to possess the standard literature of the world usually include his works in their collections, he also finds a place in those humble homes where two or three books represent the library.' Surely, this was a romantic fate for the Jewish priest-soldier, turned historian, who saved himself and betrayed his kin and cause.

Of the betrayal of his kin we cannot acquit him, though, dimly, we can see what he was aiming at, when we test his action at Jotapata by the standard of his policy as a whole. *Tout comprendre, c'est tout pardonner*, or, if this be too good for his deserts, at least we may urge that his motive, however much mixed with lower elements, was not altogether base. There he was, in the desperate plight of not being able to save a single life out of all the men under his command. These were resolute to die in the last ditch, and, if necessary, to dig it for their graves. Nothing that Josephus might say or do—no pleading of policy or pity—would avail to shake this resolve. And the bitter thing was, that he disapproved it. He saw further into the future than his followers. Beyond the disgrace of surrender and the ignominy of defeat, he saw a vision of national reconstruction consonant with the appointed course of history. Beyond the soldier's view was the priest-politician's. Somewhere Herodotus remarks that of all human woes the most intolerable is this, with amplitude of vision to have no power, and it was this sense of powerlessness which oppressed the doomed defender of Jotapata. He was filled with a knowledge of the futility of his doom, and of the blindness of those who preferred it. His act was indefensible, of course; the manipulated lot was a sin against the light. But he would have argued that not to have sinned, and to have fallen upon a Jewish sword, would have changed nothing for good except the complexion of his conscience, which, after all, would have been still. He set this good against the good which he knew that he could do in moulding Jewish destiny to the Roman design, and no sacrifice to honour would have altered that destined pattern. So he sinned, and lived. With no impulse to whitewash Josephus, it may perhaps be observed

that Machiavelli's counsels to rulers, fifteen hundred years afterwards, recommended worse courses in colder blood.

The character-test of Josephus is to be found, not in the Jotapata episode, but in the speech, in the *Jewish War*, II, xvi, which he placed in the mouth of King Agrippa at the time of the Florus *émeute*. The king had been besought by his subjects for leave to send an embassy to Nero in order to denounce the Roman governor, and his difficulty was, to refuse the request, which seemed to him impolitic, without driving his petitioners to the extreme of despair: in other words, to out-manceuvre Florus, who was calculating on this result. Like Thucydides (and possibly the device was not unknown to the authors of the Old Testament), Josephus dramatised the situation, in the sense that Agrippa's speech, though not delivered as it stands, deployed the inner facts of the situation and fitted its solution. There was as much in it of the historian as of the king, and we need not resist the conclusion that there was something in it, too, of the deserter of the forlorn hope at Jotapata. Thus, it may serve as a clue to that psychological problem. The most urgent object was delay—to restore normal conditions *cunctando*; and Agrippa showed himself fully aware that the best advice would be vain, 'when the hearers are resolved to do the contrary,'—a point of view that recurred at Jotapata. He glanced at the tragic patriots, from whose number we have excepted Josephus, 'who make a sad tale of the woes inflicted by the procurators and sing the glories of liberty.' Even should he fail to persuade them, how would they be worse off by listening quietly? They would still retain the right of action. 'The same procurator will not continue for ever, but war, if it be once begun, cannot be terminated at desire.' Then came the constant burden of Josephus's philosophy of history, the comparison of the Jews with the Gentiles. It is to this day—perhaps more than ever at this day—an extraordinarily interesting speculation, and we are to remember the circumstances of the first century A.D. Greek and Jew had met at Alexandria, but Roman and Jew had not yet met in the sense of pooling their resources for the advancement of the civilisation of mankind. Josephus was convinced that they should, and that their true destiny was not a clash in arms, pitting 'a small cause' against 'a mighty people,' and repeating the fate of the Greeks, who, though 'they brake vast Asia at little Salamis, are yet at this time servants to the Romans': he believed that the Jewish future lay in the sanctuary. 'Are you the only people,'

said Agrippa, 'who think it a disgrace to be servants to those to whom all the world hath submitted?' Where was their army? their fleet? their treasure adequate to the campaign? As to the invincible Roman, the Euphrates could not check him on the east, nor the Danube on the north; Libya had not bound him in the south, and Cadiz was his limit on the west. 'Nay, indeed, they have sought for another habitable earth beyond the ocean, and have carried their standards as far as such British islands as were never known before.' Nineteen centuries afterwards, we can forgive Josephus this argument. 'Are you richer than the Greeks, stronger than the Germans, wiser than the Greeks?' he went on to ask through the mouth of the Jewish king, and he dwelt at length on some features in those Roman victories which might give pause to the bellicose Jews. The Germans had the military advantage of breadth of territory; they had 'minds greater than their bodies, souls that despised death, and the Rhine was their boundary.' Again, 'you who depend on the wall of Jerusalem, consider what a wall the Britons had.' Yet all fell before the Roman, afar in Britain, and near in Egypt. 'What remains, therefore, is this, that you rely on Divine assistance. But this is already on the Roman side, for they would not have established so vast an empire without the providence of God.'

God is on the side of the big battalions. This was clearly Josephus's creed. But he combined it with a firm belief in the value of the little nations. He regarded Rome as a kind of Geneva, safeguarding minority rights:

'How will you call upon God to assist you, when you are voluntarily transgressing against his religion? . . . It were best, oh my friends, it were best, while the vessel is still in the haven, to foresee the impending storm, and not to set sail out of the port into the midst of the hurricanes. . . . Nay, indeed, the peril is not upon those Jews only who dwell here, but those of them who dwell in other cities also. For there is no people upon the earth who have not some of you among them. These, if you now go to war, will suffer on that account likewise, and so every city with Jews in it will be filled with bloodshed for the sake of the ill counsel of a few. . . . I call to witness your sanctuary, and the holy angels of God, and this country common to us all, that I have not kept back anything that is for your preservation.'

So Josephus wrote Agrippa's speech, while the walls of Jerusalem were still standing, and if they rejected 'safety first,'

either then or thereafter, has history justified them or their counsellor? He at least was under no delusion as to the consequences of his act. When the news of Jotapata reached Jerusalem, he narrates, the absence of eye-witnesses and the magnitude of the disaster caused at first universal incredulity. Even Josephus was reputed among the fallen, 'and this intelligence filled Jerusalem with the profoundest grief. . . . All alike wept for Josephus.' But, gradually, as the truth filtered through, and it was learned that the leader of the Jews had found a gilded cage in Rome, 'the demonstrations of wrath at his being alive were as loud as the former expressions of affection. Some abused him as a coward, others as a traitor, and universal curses were heaped upon his head.' But these did not turn him from his purpose, which was to prove to the Jews the invincibility of Rome in arms, and to prove to the Romans the invincibility of Israel in religion.

All his writings—and they were voluminous—were directed expressly to these ends. Crediting him, therefore, with this purpose, which was obviously sincere, we can better judge his policy of non-resistance to the power which was to raze the citadel of Jewish culture eighteen hundred and forty-seven years before the Balfour Declaration was issued on the eve of the British capture of Jerusalem. If Josephus had pulled his full weight, a Flavian Declaration might have preceded it.

Sometimes the psychology of a writer's text is an index to his character. Students of *The Prelude*, for example, in Dr. de Selincourt's *variorum* edition, can watch 'the growth of a poet's mind' in a sense secondary to Wordsworth's intention. They can see his ageing doubts correcting the certainties of youth, and, more fancifully, they can locate the grave which he dug for Annette Vallon and her daughter. Dr. Thackeray has studied with no less care the revelation of Josephus in his language, and some of the results are surprising. For one thing, he was bilingual. His first draft of the *Jewish War* was written in his native language, either Aramaic or Hebrew, and was addressed to 'the upper barbarians' in the outlying countries of the East in order to inform them of the might of Rome. That draft is not extant, and we should be skirting controversial topics if we speculated on its fate. Later, deeming it absurd 'to suffer those Greeks and Romans who were not in the wars to be ignorant of the truth,' he set himself, 'for the sake of such as live under the government of the Romans,' as he was living at the time, 'to translate those books into the

Greek tongue.' How much Greek did he know, this Jewish apologist and Roman imperialist, and how did he supply his shortcomings? No one questions the evidence of his immense industry and pains in acquiring the Greek language. That he was competent to invent a word—we are thinking of 'theocracy'—which is at once idiomatic and indispensable, is a sign of his immersion in Greek studies. He admits that his habituation to Hebrew made him pronounce Greek badly, but he claimed acquaintance with the literature and proficiency in the grammar. Still, his thorough knowledge of vernacular Greek was not adequate to the composition of long books, requiring and displaying true gifts of Hellenic learning and style. He had been trained as a priest among his own people, and he was a man in mature life of busy affairs, before he began by translation and went on to original work in a foreign tongue. Moreover, he acknowledges assistance. 'In my years of leisure at Rome,' he writes,¹ 'I availed myself of collaborators for the Greek language'; and the admission, though tardily made—it is not recorded in the proem to the *Jewish War*—is better late than never.

Why it was so tardy and so casual is doubtless because Josephus was politically averse from handing bouquets to Greeks. We noted above that one of his main objects was to convince the Roman conqueror that the Jews were at least equal, if not superior, to the Greeks by ancient merit and national civilisation. Hence his examination of their archaeology, in the *Antiquities of the Jews*, and hence his defence of their practices in the anti-defamation tractate *Against Apion*. The conclusion to that tractate may still stand as a landmark in Jewish apologetics. The Greeks got in the way of this object. They enjoyed better publicity than the Jews: the very choice of publicity was contrary to the dominant Jewish rule; and the religious antiquary was jealous for the purity and priority of Jewish law and worship. So he suppressed his Greek assistants. They 'had indeed a thankless taskmaster,' says Dr. Thackeray; and, though he infers from a reference in the *Jewish War* that they did not go unremunerated, they were not well rewarded in other respects.

Still, significant though it be, we must not make too much of this inhibition. There are great writers since Josephus who have shown a like reluctance to pay their debts. Not to go outside English literary history, Pope, for instance, like Josephus, was

¹ *Contra Apionem*, I, 50.

deficient in the exacter paths of Greek scholarship, and depended partly in his version of Homer ('a pretty poem, Mr. Pope, but you must not call it Homer,' said Bentley), not only on earlier translators, but also on two skilled collaborators, Elijah Fenton and the Rev. William Broome. He made as little of these obligations as he could, both in cash and in kind, so that Josephus, who was probably using slaves, and who had not Pope's advantage in literary convention, was really the more decent employer. His Fenton and Broome, so to speak, may be distinguished as 'the Thucydidean' and 'the Sophoclean,' and Dr. Thackeray, who draws this distinction, tells us that imitators of Thucydides 'were a notorious tribe in the days of Josephus,' and had been ridiculed by Cicero, before him. Cicero did not know that, in the whirligig of time, his own imitators or 'apes' would be ridiculed by Erasmus as 'Ciceronians.' Josephus's 'Thucydidean' has been credited with practically the whole of *Antiquities*, Books XVII-XIX, and with many purple patches in other parts. It was his 'Sophoclean,' however, a far superior assistant, who was employed more freely in the *Jewish War*. Into such points of *expertise* this is not the place to enter; but we may observe that they led Dr. Thackeray, shortly before his lamented death, to communicate to the British Academy a paper called *Sophocles and the Perfect Number: A Neglected Nicety*, which is included in Volume XVI of their *Proceedings*, and in which he explains how he was led from Josephus to Sophocles by the humble hand of the unrecorded slave, Josephus's Sophoclean secretary, who 'had an ear so sensitive to the niceties of his favourite poet as to detect and imitate a feature which seems strangely to have escaped the eyes of that poet's modern editors.' Truly an odd chip from the Josephan workshop.

These dead languages are so very much alive! By the mere evidence of the language itself—the choice and arrangement of words, favourite tricks of style, and so forth—scholars are able to unearth from the furrows ploughed by Titus across the soil on which Jerusalem stood the literary tastes of Greek slaves in the first century and their share in the handiwork of Josephus. By the evidence of language, again, and with a bolder sweep of conjecture, comparing Aramaic with Greek and both with Slavonic, filling up gaps and blanks, and forcing an entry into the minds of unnamed censors in the Dark Ages, philologists take leave to disturb the chronology of the Christian era, and to raise vital problems of history out of the dust of mouldered scripts. Josephus,

whose life, like a vase, shook at the clash of opposing civilisations, and hovered precariously on the edge of each, arouses after nineteen centuries fresh controversy on topics essential to the spirit of mankind. His text is still the hunting-ground of theologians, who have to arm themselves, like Winckelmann, with unaccustomed tools of archaeology in order to prosecute their studies. Even in death, his life is a romance.

'We come to awaken the dead,' exclaimed an antiquary of the Italian Renaissance, filled with its jejune enthusiasm for the recovered books of the Attic Age, and now, as then, this sense of revival is not limited by the labours of textual criticism. The *Jewish War*, for example, confesses by its very title the conversion of its Jewish author to Rome. It would be a very German Englishman who should write of the Great War as the English War. Moreover, despite his own part in it, or, more probably, because of that part, Josephus left many of its problems unsolved. A Jew, an anti-Zealot, and an imperial historiographer, he was subject to bias to both sides, and to both factions of the Jewish side. Patriotically, he might exaggerate the sacrifices of the defenders; patriotically, too, holding his view of the pacific Hebrew mission, he might exaggerate the odds to which his defeatist policy was opposed, and the same pacifism might lead him to flatter the conquerors by an over-statement of their military efficiency. The Romans were to Josephus as the Germans of 1871—a nation in arms victorious on every field, and it was his constant endeavour to keep them out of the field of Palestine. Hence, his narrative of the Romans' *Jewish War* is untrustworthy in many respects, and proceeds from a kind of inward lie; so much so, that grave doctors of divinity have to turn from their proper studies to less familiar pursuits. Dr. Foakes Jackson,¹ for example, spends a part of his history in discussing military details, and decorates some of his pages with diagrams and plans which remind us of Mr. Belloc in 1914. Thus, he tells us that 'the story of the fall of Jerusalem would be pronounced incredible, had we not the testimony of one who was an eye-witness of the unparalleled catastrophe.' He points out, following Milman, various details which arouse distrust. Josephus's 'enumeration of the numbers slain on each occasion must be received with much caution.' His hate of the Zealots, 'whom he is merely able to credit with a sort of diabolic courage, combined with ruthless cruelty not only to

¹ *Josephus and the Jews*, London, 1930.

the Roman enemy but to the party of moderation in Jerusalem,' to which he himself belonged, is another factor of doubt, and 'all that he tells us,' declares Dr. Jackson, 'must be received with caution, whatever our estimate of his character may be.' Again, 'the difficulties which the Roman army had to encounter' have to be measured by the evidence of a leader of disaffection among the besieged, and 'it must not be forgotten that he was writing under imperial patronage to exalt the exploits of the Flavian house.'

It is a strange foundation for military history, and we could wish that Major-General Sir Frederick Maurice, the London professor of military studies, would bring his expert criticism to bear on it. He has shown in a kindred field how quickening and useful such criticism may be. Writing in the *Journal of Hellenic Studies*¹ on 'The Size of the Army of Xerxes in the Invasion of Greece, 480 B.C.,' he brings to the narrative of Herodotus precisely the gifts in kind which are desiderated for Josephus. For he treats military history as a soldier, and first of all fulfils the prime condition of traversing the route of the campaign with the eye of a D.M.O. and with a modern map.

'Since 1922,' he writes, 'I have at my leisure examined the accounts of a considerable number of the authorities who have described Xerxes' invasion of Greece, from Grote to Mr. J. A. R. Munro in the *Cambridge Ancient History*, and it would appear that no one of them had either himself examined the north-eastern portion of the Gallipoli peninsula or had access to the reports of anyone who had done so.'

This is the authentic Winckelmann touch, the true awakening of the dead, *ein Lebendiges für die Lebendigen geschrieben*, as Goethe called it; and Josephus, so far as that matters, would have approved of Sir F. Maurice in this capacity. For Josephus did not love the Greeks, and the revised story of Xerxes hardly sustains the glory that was Greece. 'Herodotus,' says Sir Frederick, 'evidently sought to cover up the halting and ineffective action of the Greek land forces and to make the whole story one blaze of glory.' But 'the whole story,' in his review, 'does not speak highly of the Greek military intelligence.' This judgment is reached through a series of enquiries into such technical details as transport, water, marches, bridges, bivouacs, etc.: technical details which add up to an almost revolutionary conclusion. Herodotus's estimate of the Persian army is found to be 'impossible,' and, though 'the second Persian

¹ Vol. I, 1930.

attack on the pass seems to have been delivered too soon and to have caused the Persians some unnecessary loss' (for 'the timing of a frontal attack with a flank attack when the flanking force has to march by night over mountainous country is always a very difficult matter'), yet, 'save for this, they seem to have conducted their operation intelligently, and as indeed one would expect from men who have performed the fine military feat of marching a large army through some 800 miles of difficult country.' We cannot pause at these operations, the new lights on which will be essential to all future historians at Thermopylae. We refer to Sir F. Maurice's monograph, however, as a signal instance of writing history by common sense, and of correcting the partisans who neglected it, in the interests of one or another cause, by expert evidence of what men can do in circumstances checked by competent observation. It is a very simple process, when we apply it, but the Turks did not encourage its application on Gallipoli, and it has not yet been applied to the Roman campaign against the Jews. Josephus, like Herodotus, wrote his history on and for the winning side. When Cato wears the brass-hat of the General Staff, the truth is told of the *victa causa*.

LAURIE MAGNUS.

LITERARY ACROSTICS.

A LITERARY Acrostic is published every month, and the Editor of THE CORNHILL MAGAZINE offers two prizes to the most successful solvers. The winners will be entitled to choose books to the value of £1 from Mr. Murray's catalogue. If several solvers send solutions of equal merit, the two whose answers are opened first will win the prizes.

DOUBLE ACROSTIC No. 95.

'—— went the whip, —— went the wheels,
Were never folk so glad,
The stones did rattle underneath
As if Cheapside were mad.'

1. 'The desire of the moth for the ——,
Of the night for the morrow,
The devotion to something afar
From the sphere of our sorrow.'

2. 'My object all sublime
I shall achieve in time—
To make the punishment fit the crime.'

3. '——, —— ! my native shore
Fades o'er the waters blue.'

4. '—— to right of them,
—— to left of them,
—— in front of them
Volley'd and thunder'd.'

5. 'Be to her virtues very ——;
Be to her faults a little blind.'

RULES.

1. Only one answer may be sent to each light.
2. Every correct light and upright will score one point.
3. With his answer every solver must send the coupon that is printed on page vi of 'Book Notes' in the preliminary pages of this issue; and he must be careful to give also his real name and address.
4. Solvers should not write either the quotations or the references on the same paper as their answers. It is not necessary, or even desirable, to send them at all.
5. Solvers who write a second letter, to correct a previous answer, must send the complete solution as they wish it, and not merely state the desired alteration.
6. Answers to Acrostic No. 95 should be addressed to the Acrostic Editor, THE CORNHILL MAGAZINE, 50 Albemarle Street, London, W.1, and must arrive not later than July 21. No answers will be opened before this date.

ANSWER TO No. 94.

1.	S	unse	T
2.	H	oede	R
3.	I	nfinit	E
4.	N	ameles	S
5.	I	ri	S
6.	N	ativ	E
7.	G	audentiu	S

PROEM:

Hiawatha, v.

LIGHTS:

1. *Morituri Salutamur.*
2. *Tegnér's Drapa.*
3. *Evangeline*, i, 3.
4. *In the Harbor. Mad River.*
5. *Flower-de-Luce.*
6. *The Skeleton in Armor.*
7. *Michael Angelo*, Part Third, iv.

Acrostic No. 93 ('Relief Thanks'): The prizes are taken by Mr. C. E. Brown Douglas, Fonhill Hotel, Reigate, Surrey, and Miss A. L. Barlow, Bedgebury Park, Goudhurst, Kent, whose answers were the first that were opened and proved to be correct. These two competitors will choose books to the value of £1 from Mr. Murray's catalogue.

A query has reached the Acrostic Editor as to the most convenient form of writing out solutions. For Acrostic No. 95, the new one printed in this issue, a very simple form is to write the two uprights in capitals, and fill in the five horizontal words, as printed above in the answer to No. 94, and to write nothing else except name and address.

The references, printed above, are given for the interest and satisfaction of solvers; they are in the nature of explanatory notes, and they are not part of the answer.

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